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THREE WORLD RECORDS CLAIMED AT 1987 NORTH AMERICAN TOURNAMENT OF CHAMPIONS

Top Players Compete For Player-of-the-Year Honors

On January 17-18, 1987, only one week before the Super Bowl, some of the world's finest video game players gathered at the Airport Hilton and Towers Hotel in Los Angeles to compete in the 1986 **North American Video Game Tournament of Champions**. Top players from across North America were invited by the **U.S. National Video Game Team**, based on their past performances in various contests as well as their proficiency on different types of games. Not only would the top winner become a member of the **U.S. National Video Game Team**, he would also be appropriately crowned **Player-of-the-Year**.

The fifth edition of the Player-of-the-Year competition was co-sponsored by the **Amusement Players Association**, **Games Unlimited** (a leading Southern California video game operator), and the **Los Angeles Airport Hilton and Towers**. **Bally/Midway**, **Bally/Sente**, and **Romstar** provided the contest games as well as the prizes.

The competition was comprised of play on three of the best games of 1986. **Bally/Midway's Power Drive**, a very physical contest requiring stamina and speed;

Bally/Sente's Night Stocker, a combination driving/shooting game requiring precise hand-eye coordination; and **Romstar's Arkanoid**, a quick reflex title that involved some complex strategies to maximize points. These machines represent a good cross-section of the playing skills that only the truly elite gamers possess. Besides winning high status among players everywhere, the top three finishers also received copies of the competition games for their efforts!

*...The competition machines (**Power Drive**, **Night Stocker**, and **Arkanoid**) represent a good cross-section of the playing skills that only the truly elite gamers possess...*

The competition was structured under the standard **Amusement Players Association's** tournament rules and scoring system. While the players were divided into three groups, they were given the opportunity to record their highest totals on each of the contest games. These scores were then compared against the rest of the field with the top score on each game taking 100 percentage points, and all other competitors taking a fraction of that total. This same format was used on both days of the tournament, with the exception of a special rotation

that allowed the players to address the games which they felt they were lacking in. As in bowling, the perfect game would be 300.

At the conclusion of play on the evening of January 18, the top scores would be tabulated and the trophies and prizes presented to the winners. Another portion of the **Coronation Day** ceremonies would witness the presentation of the **Players Choice Awards**; special honors bestowed upon only the best games and personalities of the coin-operated amusement industry.

As players finished their warm-up games in preparation for the first round of play, a very competitive group of professionals stood ready. Among the crowd of favored players was **Donn** (continued on Back Cover)



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IN-FOCUS

■ The Nintendo Entertainment System	
The recent proliferation of new home video game systems has brought forth an abundance of familiar titles guaranteed to entertain players after the arcades have closed for the night. While Atari has re-entered the home gaming sweepstakes with their modified 2600 and advanced 7800 models, Nintendo , the coin-op manufacturer of arcade favorites such as Super Mario Bros. and Hogan's Alley , has introduced the Nintendo Entertainment System . The NES , already a best-seller in Japan (over 8,000,000 units sold), boasts a multitude of exciting features, including a zapper light gun and an interactive robot that actually plays the games with you! With its outstanding game play and wide assortment of software, many are calling the NES "the most advanced home video game playing system ever released." Find out why in this special In-Focus segment which also includes reviews of the best game cartridges available.	S2-S3

Top Score

NEWSLETTER

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WINTER, 1987

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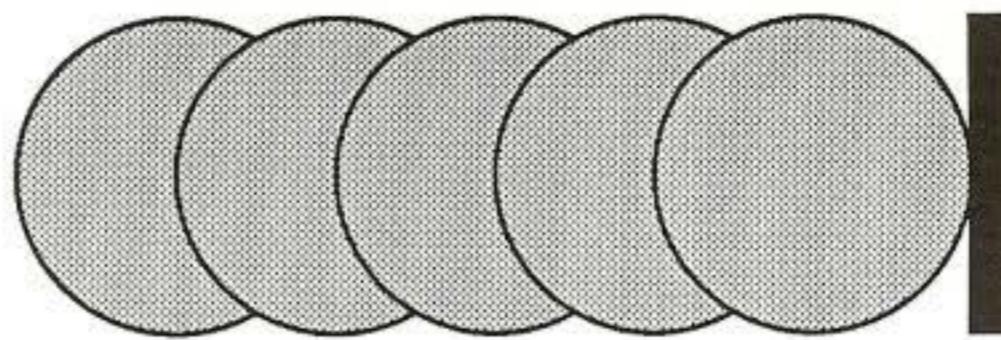
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The **Amusement Players Association**, the international organization of video game and pinball players: Steve Harris, President; Perry Rodgers, Treasurer; Jeff Peters, Regional Representative Coordinator.



INSERT COIN

Welcome once again to **Top Score**, your ticket to the world of video games and pinball playing. Even as this issue goes to press, we continue to receive your positive and enthusiastic letters of encouragement and criticism. Judging from the response, you enjoy what you're seeing. In fact the only criticism we've received (if it can be called that) is that we're not larger or able to devote more attention to other segments of the gaming industry. However, with this, our second issue, I'm proud to announce that **Top Score** not only has an expanded format to include more coverage of pinball machines and other novelties, but an expanded page number as well.

Examples of our growing commitment to the members of the **Amusement Players Association** can be found throughout this edition of **Top Score**. We bring you behind-the-scenes coverage of our national **Player-of-the-Year** tournament (**front cover**) as well as special reports from both the **A.M.O.A. Expo '86 (page 3)** and the **Pinball Expo '86 (page 4)**. We've also started several new regular features that are guaranteed to keep you informed of all the latest playing news and trends. For a look at what's popular, you'll find a golden list of the **Coin-Op Top Ten**, reprinted straight from the pages of **RePlay Magazine**, the coin-op bible. You'll also discover a new section devoted entirely to your thoughts and opinions. **Logon: Letters to the Editor** is your forum to address anything and everything pertaining to games and game playing. And, in the **Winner's Corner**, you can read about the victors of skill and luck, as well as all the results of both **APA** and non-**APA** tournaments and competitions.

We've also included a new addition to **Top Score** that we're sure everyone will welcome. The **Top Score Home Gaming Supplement** will bring select **APA** members more information from the revitalized consumer market. Coverage of industry events like the Winter **Consumer Electronics Show (CES)** in Las Vegas and new product reviews are but a sample of what the supplement will bring you each issue. In the future you'll find game endorsements from two of the computer field's leading entertainment software critics. Both **Todd Rodgers** and **Brent Walker** have rich backgrounds in the computer industry; experience that will be passed on to you in each and every issue of the **Top Score Newsletter**.

The introduction of these new features, combined with all of our regular departments, have been made to help insure you a better, more interactive gaming magazine. Expect to see more contests and competitions, as well as posters and other special items like the **Strange Science** comic book in this issue.

Remember, the only way we can improve the look and feel of **Top Score** is with your help. Keep those letters coming! The better we know you, the better the newsletter will be. And don't forget to join the **APA** or, if you already have, convince a friend to join. The benefits of membership greatly outweigh the low annual fees.

One last thing. Don't listen to those doomsayers who have forecasted the end of the industry a million times before. The future of video game and pinball playing is bright and encouraging thanks to your support. As the industry begins to feel the current resurgence in play expect to see more innovations and more high-class product in your local arcade or gaming locations. And, when you see the next generation of video and pin titles, remember who made it all possible.

As always, may all your scores be the tops!

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Perry Rodgers
Perry Rodgers

HOT NEW GAMES DEBUT FOR THE WINTER SEASON

AMOA Expo '86 Previews Sizzling Lineup of Video and Pin Games

How would you like to take a sneak peek behind the scenes of the coin-op industry's biggest trade show? Well then, grab your V.I.P. passport and come with us to the windy city of Chicago to attend the annual **Amusement and Music Operators Association's** (AMOA) exposition of music and games. Not only did we see some great games that are already in arcades (like **Arkanoid** and **Night Stalker**), but we also got to sample a number of new entries that will be making their way into locations near you in the coming months...

Dozens of major manufacturers were represented at this year's AMOA expo. From **Atari** to **Williams Electronics**, every company had a secret game up their sleeve and on display in the show's spacious exhibit hall. In addition to the usual number of space shoot-em-ups and maze chases, game manufacturers dished up a wide assortment of original and challenging titles that are guaranteed to thrill players over the coming winter months.

As could be expected, **Atari Games** unveiled their latest tour-de-force, **720°**. This skateboarding themed contest creates an entirely original environment with which to interact. Boasting the same high-quality of game play that **Atari** is known for, **720°** saw plenty of action during the convention.

Bally/Midway and **Bally/Sente** shared a large area on the floor to debut a number of exciting machines. **Strange Science** pinball, undoubtedly the best pin to appear from **Bally** in some time, made an outstanding showing along with **Power Drive** and **Street Football**. **Power Drive**



BY THE UNITED STATES NATIONAL VIDEO GAME TEAM

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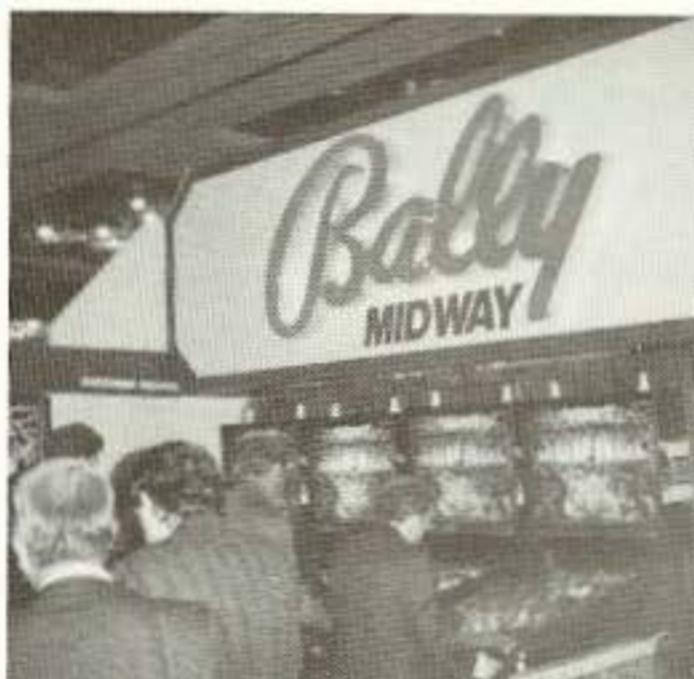
capitalizes on the popular 'masher trucks' that make mincemeat out of old autos. **Street Football**, on the other hand, recreates the action of three man ball played, where else, on the street, with all the appropriate hazards (cars, manholes, etc.).

Besides **Strange Science**, other pinball games also made outstanding showings. **Premier's** new "Top Gun" inspired **Gold Wings** pin shared centerstage with their earlier blockbuster, **Genesis**. **Williams**, meanwhile, made a strong impression with their **Pin-Bot** table, an exciting blend of themes executed to complete perfection.

Speaking of **Williams**, this one-time leader of videos (remember **Defender**) sprung a long-awaited surprise with the introduction of **Joust 2: Survival of the Fittest**, a great sequel to their earlier bird-bashing contest. **Joust 2** takes place on a variety of backdrops and brings in a supporting cast of additional opponents. Another interesting feature is the new ability to transform from bird to pegasus for added speed on the land.

Exidy brought a new spy-themed driving game called **0077** to the AMOA. While avoiding commie cars that fill the roads, you can enhance the power of your car with a wide variety of attachments like oil slicks and laser beams. A long line of sequels (**0088**, **0099**, etc.) has been promised.

Nintendo offered up an assortment of new titles to convert existing hardware. Besides their intriguing **VS. Slalom**, **Nintendo** bowed the **Nemesis** inspired **Gradius** as well as **The Goonies**. Based on the hit Steven Spielberg movie of the same name, **Goonies** takes you on



an underground adventure in search of lost children, while **Cyndi Lauper's** hit soundtrack beats in the background.

Other promising pieces included **Sun Electronics' Sky Kid**, **Grand Product's Up Scope** (an interesting variation of the classic **Sea Wolf**), **Romstar's** new shooting game, **Side Arms**, and **Capcom's** dual-themed entry, **Legendary Wings**.

The most notable development in the coin-op arena, however, could be found at a number of booths at the show. New games that utilize realistic simulators to enhance play were the talk of the show. Leading the way in this innovative field was **Sega's** truly incredible driving title, **Out Run**. **Out Run** is the most realistic video driving game ever created, and, with the added embellishments afforded by the 'stimulator' cabinet, the most enjoyable as well. From the crisp and detailed visuals to the outstanding stereo soundtrack, **Out Run** has it all. Although the **Sega** booth sported no less than six **Out Run** machines, there was still a half hour wait to play!

Another superb driving simulator that was unfortunately overshadowed by **Out Run's** excellence was **Konami's** new **WEC Le Mans**. Regardless, **Le Mans** pulled in its share of attention with a very unusual saucer-shaped cabinet that spins in sync with the steering!

Always in the forefront of new technologies, **Cinematronics**, the makers of the first laser-disc game, **Dragon's Lair**, have done it once again! **Danger Zone**, a new and very realistic anti-aircraft gunner simulation, drew outstanding reviews from the show attendees. Using first-person perspective play, you must shoot down wave after wave of incoming fighter/bombers while protecting your beachfront. Through its superior design, **Danger Zone** allows you to actually turn the entire monitor with the joystick assembly, surveying the airspace around you. **Danger Zone** is the first video game to actually give you the feel of what it might be like to knock a Libyan plane out of the sky — it's just too bad you can't go after Khadafi yourself (after all, who rules a country and only makes himself a Colonel?). Oh well, maybe next year.

As we walk out of the exhibit hall and strolled past the countless crane and merchandise machines which were also a big hit at the show, we agreed that 1987 will undoubtedly be a golden year for arcade video and pinball games. And, as the new games slowly filter into local gaming locations, you'll discover firsthand just how good video and pin games can get.

The **U.S. National Video Game Team** is comprised of the nation's top video and pinball playing athletes. The team represents the United States in international play and sponsors a variety of tournaments and competitions.

PINBALL EXPO '86

Top Pinball Enthusiasts Gather for Silverball Excitement

This year's **Pinball Expo** at the O'Hare/Kennedy Holiday Inn in Rosemont, Illinois proved to have something for every pinball fan. The three-day event (November 21-23, 1986) included seminars, panelist discussions with pinball designers, a trip to the **Williams Electronics Games** facility, and an exhibit hall donning pinball games from both past and present. T-Shirts, bumper stickers, collectable advertising flyers, and posters were anxiously claimed by pinball enthusiasts from around the world.

The most exciting feature of Pinball Expo '86 was the **Flip Out '86** pinball contest open to all attendees. This event gathered together some of the top notch players in the country to display their silverball talent. Our **Top Score** staff was there to capture all the action from the preliminary rounds on Friday and Saturday to the exciting showdown of the finalists at the Pinball Expo banquet Saturday night.

FLIP OUT '86

Thursday - November 20

Exhibitors prepare for opening day. Center Stage: five **Williams' Pin-Bot** machines lay idle, freshly uncrated, their playfields waxed for tournament play. Tomorrow these machines will come alive with a dazzling array of flashing lights and high-tech sounds. Pinball players will approach the games tomorrow to play a preliminary round; with the eight top gamers proceeding on to the finals Saturday night. And the top prize? What else, a brand new **Pin-Bot** machine courtesy of **Williams Electronics**.

Friday - November 21

The competition begins. Players plunge and lunge for millions of points. The most avid gamers survey each machine in an effort to determine which machine will be the most liberal. These same players observe others so that they might pick up some of the minute details of just how the ball will roll come their turn to play. Though the competition on the playfield is fierce, players exchange "pinball stories of the past" between games.

The competition allows for two consecutive games, the best score being recorded by the contest officials. Extra game chances can be purchased for \$5.00/2 plays (and to think that you could get three games for a quarter in the "good old days").

The first preliminary round comes to a close late Friday night. Those not fortunate today will be offered another chance to make the finals tomorrow, and those that believe they had a birth in the finals locked up will have to wait and

hope that the ringers will not show up at the last minute to knock them out of the championship round. Leading the way is Corky Stacey with 2,657,200, followed closely by Jerry Jackson who boasted a fine 1,971,420 and Mike Gottlieb with his equally impressive 1,922,060.

Saturday - November 22

Today Jim Briney, currently sixth with 1,698,360, seeks to pad his position in the top eight. After several games, Jim scores 3,279,050 to take the lead.

As suspected, the top players did wait for the last day of competition to play their preliminary games. One such arrival was Jim Shird from Madison, Wisconsin. In his first two games Jim scores an effortless 5,978,990, easily qualifying him for the finals. Others are stunned when the score is finally displayed on the leader board.

The final games are furiously played as much attention is focused on the leader board to determine the finalists that will appear at the banquet later that night.

Flip Out '86
Preliminary Round Results
1) 5,978,990 Jim Shird
2) 3,279,080 Jim Briney
3) 2,657,200 Corky Stacey
4) 2,356,590 Dann Frank
5) 1,971,420 Jerry Jackson
6) 1,922,060 Mike Gottlieb
7) 1,833,120 Dave Hege
8) 1,782,810 Steve Engel



Noted pinball Author/Player Roger Sharpe gives the Pin-Bot a workout.



David Engel receives Top Player honors from the lovely Diane Kordek.

Guests from the www.videoparadise-sanjose.com

banquet table from player to player as the contest begins.

The competition game is unveiled: a mint condition copy of **Gottlieb's Krull**. The game was never released and only ten prototypes exist. Conceivably, none of the finalists have played this game before. This championship round will inevitably crown tonight's best pinball player, versus tonight's best **Pin-Bot** player.

Each finalist will play one game on **Krull**. The highest score will determine the winner of a new **Pin-Bot** pinball machine. Two monitors display all the action for those seated in the back of the room. Photographers and reporters gather about the game to capture the exciting flipper action.

Jim Briney (seeded #2) is the first to display

his skills that earned him a birth in the championships. Jim scores a disappointing 34,900 points.

Mike Gottlieb (seeded #6) lives up to his name tonight. The young pinball master, said to be born with a flipper in each hand, played an intense game and scored a comfortable 343,010 to take the lead.

Jim Shird (seeded #1), the favorite going into the competition after having awed all competitors in preliminaries, calmly approaches the machine and actually reads the game play instructions, an intelligent move considering that he has never played the game before. His composure is good enough to earn him 275,350 and second place.

With the number one seed having now played through, it seems that Mike Gottlieb's score may hold up against the rest of the competition. But his lead proves to be too little as Steve Engle, who scored only 1,782,810 to enter the finals, racks up an impressive 473,100.

Jerry Jackson (seeded #5) is the fifth to play. Jerry uses his expert talents to send the ball through a chute to enter the mini playfield for more points. But his final score of 248,350 is only good for a current placement of fourth.

Corky Stacey (seeded #3) is anxious to play. He has observed five other games and already feels he has the touch to take over the lead in the competition. Corky's dazzling play caught the attention of the banquet guests as it appeared that he was about to take the lead. He saves a drain on the right side of the playfield and then comes back with two amazing middle drain saves. His flipper mastery earns him an exceptional score of 423,980, placing him second just behind Steve Engel.

Dave Hege (seeded #7) scored 183,740 while Dann Frank (seeded #4) scored a 255,580 to round out the **Flip Out '86** competition.

So Steve Engel wins the competition and is awarded a brand new **Pin-Bot** machine. He accepts his award and is crowned **Flip Out '86** Champion by the beautiful Diane Kordek, daughter of legendary pin designer Steve Kordek.

ON THE FLIP SIDE

Roger Sharpe, pinball expert and author of the book **Pinball!**, just couldn't stand not being recognized during the evening's festivities. After contest play ended, Roger stepped up to the **Krull** machine to play a game of doubles with pinball ace Stephen Gottlieb. Roger showed his superior knowledge of the game by scoring 926,500, nearly doubling Steve Engel's contest winning score. Way to go Rog!

Flip Out '86 Championship Round Results

1) 473,100	Steve Engel
2) 423,980	Corky Stacey
3) 343,010	Mike Gottlieb
4) 275,350	Jim Shird
5) 255,580	Dann Frank
6) 248,350	Jerry Jackson
7) 183,740	Dave Hege
8) 34,900	Jim Briney

On December 12, 1986, several of Hollywood's leading television and movie stars competed with the gaming public during the **Nintendo Super Mario-A-Thon**. The contest, held in Beverly Hills, California, raised funds for the Scott Newman Foundation, a charity organization founded to battle drug abuse in the film industry.

Justin Bateman (Mallory on the NBC hit *Family Ties*), **Kimberly McCollough** (Robin on *General Hospital*), and **Wil Wheaton** (Gordie in the movie *Stand By Me*) were among the celebrities in attendance.

Participants competed with the stars, playing the **Super Mario Bros.** game on the **Nintendo Entertainment System**, recording their top scores within a ten minute time limit.

Although a number of competitors displayed extraordinary prowess in maneuvering Mr. Mario about eight separate worlds, Wil Wheaton bested all comers with a very impressive 239,800. *Congratulations!*

The **Gauntlet II Player Quest Contest** has come to an end! The hide-and-seek tournament challenged players throughout the United States and Canada to locate secret rooms, buried deep within the game's programming, perform a specific task, and get out before time expires.

In all, Atari received 418 valid entries from 349 different players. All of these players received an official **Gauntlet II Player Quest Contest T-Shirt**. From the valid submissions, Atari randomly drew six lucky entries, with each player receiving a series EE U.S. Savings Bond.

First	\$5,000	Kelly Henning	Eglin, Florida	Fourth	\$1,000	Michael Kuntz	Pleasanton, CA
Second	\$2,000	Darren Moore	Abilene, Texas	Fifth	\$600	Mike Halby	Ft. Richardson, Alaska
Third	\$1,400	Ann Pham	Fairbanks, Alaska	Sixth	\$400	Casey Pierce	San Luis Obispo, CA

Due to the positive feedback that the contest received from players and game operators, Atari is considering future competitions of this type.

The **Texas-State Player of the Year** is none other than **Donn Nauert** of Austin. Donn outscored a field of competitors to claim the top honors January 11.

The tournament included play on **Bally/Sente's Night Stocker**, **Nintendo's VS. Slalom**, and **Tradewest's** follow-up to **Ikari Warriors**, **Victory Road**.

Donn showcased his talents by scoring a perfect 300 tournament points, followed by **Joe Plasse** who nudged out third place finisher **John Harwood** with 161 tournament points. John, in turn, came up with a close 152 tournament points.

Proceeds from the five dollar contest entry fees went to the **Central Texas Chapter of the March of Dimes**. Money raised by the competition games also went to benefit this worthy cause.

LOGON: LETTER'S TO THE EDITOR

CHEERS...

Dear Steve,

I'm just writing to let you know how much we appreciate your new **Top Score Newsletter** over here in England. Frankly, it's brilliant — the sort of mag that I wished we had over here. Will you be featuring any news or articles from British arcades in future issues? I would love to see this.

I hope being from England does not exclude me from submitting high scores to the scoreboard, as I noticed no foreign entries (except for Canada).

And, while we're on the subject of high scores, what exactly does it mean on the verification form when it asks for the "Difficulty Level...?" Is this the game setting (e.g. number of lives)? Secondly, the form asks for the "Units at Start..." and the "Total Units...". What do these terms mean?

Is this the number of lives received or how many coins you put in at the start of the game? Please answer these, as I can't send in my scores until I find out. I'm sorry if these are self-explanatory to you, but it seems that we refer to games differently over here.

Keep up the good work.

Darren Gregory

Lancashire, England

(ed. Thanks for the nice comments about the newsletter, Darren. It's always nice to hear from our friends overseas. Expect to see a feature article on the arcades of England in a future issue.)

Although the majority of the scores that appeared in the last issue of **Top Score** were from the United States and Canada as you observed, we do not exclude anyone from submitting scores from abroad. In fact, we have several members of HMR video game troops that currently have high scores on games that did not appear on last issue's list.

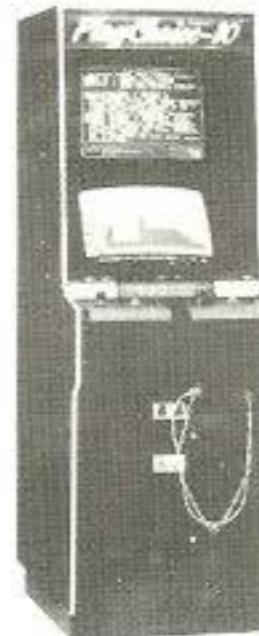
Regarding your questions pertaining to the verification forms. "Difficulty Level" represents the operator selected skill level found in most machines (**Galaga**, for example, has four difficulty switches, while **Robotron** has ten and **Defender** has an amazing 100 different difficulty settings!) "Units at Start" and "Total Units" refer to game lives.

Now go get those high scores!

...AND JEERS...

I am very proud to receive the **Top Score Newsletter**. It is good to see a magazine for the player as opposed to the operator (**RePlay/Play Meter**).

One thing that I'm not too pleased with, however, is the **Strategy Session**. I'm impressed that someone knows so much about the game and is willing to share his secrets, but this practice has its drawbacks. Peo-



ple will be claiming scores on **Super Mario Bros.** that they obtained by using these 'tricks' that don't count in tournaments and in the **Guinness Book**.

Another thing, who decides which games are to be included in the **Masters Tournament**? Why do you recognize scores on some games and not others? I'll give it to you straight; I can see that David Palmer is an excellent player, boasting numerous scores and records, but is he better than someone else whose game isn't in the contest? After all, **Firefox** and **Red Baron** are not exactly two of the games that people are beating a path to.

I suggest that you rate players according to which games they play. For example, group games like **Pac-Man** and **Asteroids** in a different class than **Track & Field** and **Super Mario Bros.**. Create a scale and have players fill out their high scores. Of course the guidelines for no trick play would be in effect.

Sincerely,
Keith Donnelly
North Dade, Florida

(ed. Last things first, Keith. Your suggestions and ideas on rating players are very valid, but the APA already uses a similar system to determine the best players for our invitational competitions. We may expand this procedure and publish a top ten list in the future if interest warrants it.)

Your questions about the **Masters Tournament** are also with merit. Believe me Keith, we'd like to include every game ever created in this contest, but, due to space restrictions in the **Guinness Book of World Records**, we are limited to around 120. To make sure that we get only the best games in the contest, we discuss the various possibilities which meet our approval. To be eligible for the **Guinness** contest, a game must be competitive, display a variety of playing skills, and have a large following. And, even though they didn't have widespread distribution, both **Red Baron** and **Firefox** represent the best of the simulator games which showcase David

Palmer's talents so well.

Your concerns about our **Strategy Session** column (which, incidentally, is the favorite feature of **Top Score** readers according to our recent survey), however, are totally unfounded. It is the policy of this publication to never print any playing tips or secrets which can prove detrimental to the game owner. We'd love to tell you how to get free games and extra men on the games, but if we did the person who owns the machine would not be able to recoup his investment and buy the new titles when they come out. No part of the **Super Mario Bros.** strategy article discussed illegal playing techniques (like the 'bouncing turtle' trick which awards hundreds of extra men and millions of points).)

HURRY, CALL WEBSTER'S

Dear Top Score,

What exactly is a coin-op video game? Are coin-op games played in the arcade or at home?

Me and my sister both like your magazine a lot. I am 7 and she is 6.

Sincerely,
Joey Simmons
Deluth, Minnesota

(ed. Thank you for the compliment Joey. Coin-op is short for coin-operated, as in video and pinball games that require money to play. And, yes, they're usually found in arcades and convenience stores. Home games, meanwhile, are referred to as programmable games. **Nintendo**, however, has just released a new coin-op 'jukebox' that uses home game cartridges. It's called **Play Choice 10**.)

WANTED: MORE PINBALL

Dear APA,

How about giving a little more attention to my personal forte, pinball. In the last issue the only coverage of pin games came in the form of a short review of **Special Force**. With great games like **Pin-Bot** and **Gold Wings** in the arcades I feel you should devote more space to pinball machines. Also, how about more pinball high scores?

Best regards,
Wayne Wright
Dayton, Ohio

(ed. You asked for it, you got it! Actually, we've been planning to expand our coverage of pin games for some time. This issue brings you a behind-the-scenes account of the **1986 Pinball Expo**, as well as additional pinball high scores.)

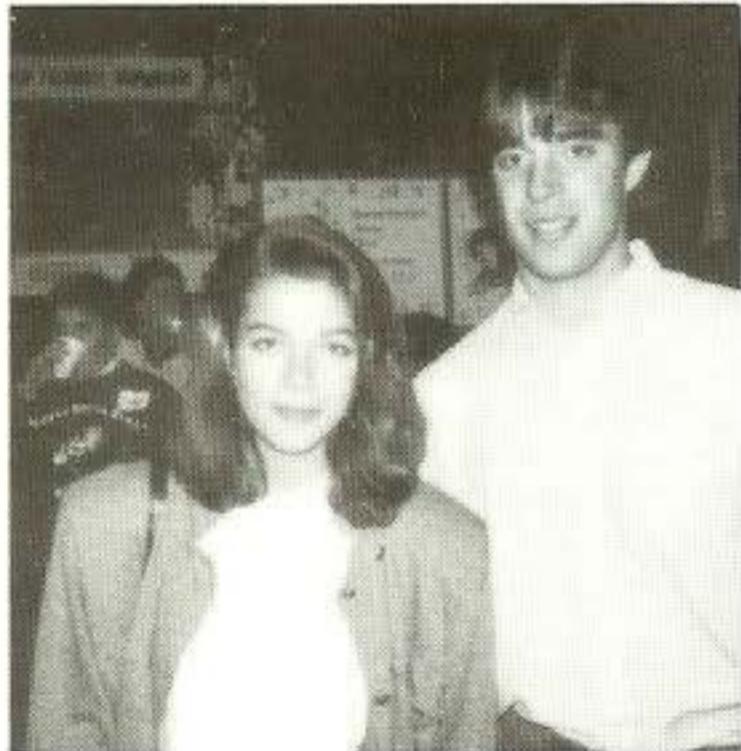
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Gaming Gossip . . .

...Beverly Hills . . . Chicago . . . San Jose . . . Soviet Union . . .

The U.S. National Video Game Team presented a variety of awards to machines that exhibited outstanding design during the recent Amusement and Music Operators Association's annual Expo of music and games in Chicago. The list of winners included **Cinematronics' Danger Zone** (most innovative new release); **Atari's** unique new entry, **720°** (most challenging new release); **Bally/Midway's** pinball power house, **Strange Science** (best pinball game of show); and **Out Run**, the latest tour-de-force from **Sega Enterprises**. Congratulations to one and all on a fantastic showing. . . Other AMOA expo rumors concerned the sizzling success and tremendous popularity that pinball machines are enjoying. After gaining a foothold with mega-hits like **High Speed** and **Hollywood Heat** early last year, pinball has made an exciting comeback with the AMOA introductions of **Strange Science**, **Williams' Pin-Bot**, and **Premier's Gold Wings**. All three placed in the U.S. National Video Game Team's expo top ten



Justine Bateman, star of the TV mega-hit, *Family Ties*, poses with Top Score Editor, Perry Rodgers at the recent Nintendo Super-Mario-A-Thon contest.

list. . . Other pinball news: **Data East USA**, the American subsidiary that has brought Japanese block-busters like **Karate Champ** and **Commando** to these shores, announced that they will begin producing their own line of pins here in the states. Industry veteran **Garry Stern** (remember the **Stern** company that brought us **Bezerk** a few years back?) will head this new venture. Best of luck! . . . A new member on the U.S. National Video Game Team? This was just one of the many rumors that circulated after team member and **Top Score** editor **Perry Rodgers** suffered a startling defeat to video game fan and **Stand By Me** movie star **Will Wheaton**. During the recent competition on the **Nintendo Entertainment System** version of **Super Mario Bros.**, actors competed with the general public for a complete system/software outfit. **Wheaton** barely outscored **Rodgers** in the final seconds of the twenty minute contest, racking up an impressive 239,800 (just kidding Perry). . . **Mark Alpiger**, the **Crystal Castles** whiz from Louisville, phoned to let us know that you must jump 128 or more times in the front corner of the first board of **Crystal** to get the secret sur-

prise on the next level. Sorry 'bout that guys. . . Speaking of **Crystal Castles**, did you know that fantasy game was originally developed as an **Asteroids** derivative titled **Toporoids**. . . Has **Pac-Man** turned red? Recently a West German distributor displayed several coin-op games behind the iron curtain in **Soviet Georgia**, including a **Gauntlet** and some pins.

Donkey Kong. . . Good news for everyone who found a **Nintendo Entertainment System** under their tree on Christmas morning. Dozens of new cartridges are planned for release in 1987 and at least one independent company has unveiled software. . . For all you trivia buffs out there: the first coin-op video game was not, contrary to public opinion, **Nolan Bushnell's Pong**. It was **Computer Space**. And don't worry if you never saw a **CS** machine because there was only one made by the designers at **M.I.T.** If you want to know how it played, however, go find a **Space Wars** game. . . Whatever happened to **Donkey Kong Jr.**, **Popeye**, and other vintage games from the early days of the video boom? Most have been converted into new games like **VS. Excitebike** and **Rygar**. . . If you're ever walking down the street and you see someone who resembles the characters from **Karate Champ**, don't panic! It's only **Top Score** associate editor **Jeff Peters**. . . Before it was bought by **Nolan Bushnell's Pizza Time Theater** (and subsequently sold to **Bally**), the engineers and programmers of **Sente** had formed their own company called **Videa**. They had even produced their own game prior to the name change. That effort, **Gridlee**, featured a walking soda bottle that caught rubber balls and shot them back at a weird assortment of opponents, including pogo sticks, on a pseudo-three-dimensional plain. Although it sported some interesting qualities, **Gridlee** never saw the light of day. . . Even though it is now common practice for game designers to take credit for their work, many older models have their creator's identities

secretly programmed into the games themselves. To find out the (strange) name of the Japanese programmer of **Xevious** merely hold the joystick to the right while constantly dropping bombs at the beginning of play. After a few seconds his name will appear. To see what the designers of **Journey** looked like, simply depress all the buttons while holding the joystick to the left during the attract mode. . . Ever see a game called **QB-3**? Neither have we. But from what we've heard about this 1982 **Rock-Ola** prototype (which found its way into only a few Chicago arcades) there really have never been any video games quite like it. . . Are holographic games on the way? Actually they've already come and gone. In 1980 **Atari** unveiled plans to develop a programmable stand-alone that utilized this advanced technology. Entitled **Cosmos**, this experimental system was introduced by its creator at a press conference in the spring of 1980 — only to disappear later with little fanfare. . . If you're ever in Chicago go check out the **McDonald's** restaurant on Ohio Street. It's decorated in full 50's/60's style, with a life-sized plaster reproduction of the **Beatles** doing their Abby Road saunter. . . Did you know that video and pinball games are banned in the Philippines? So much for revolutionary democracy. . . Check the calendar of events in this issue for the latest APA tournament information or call (816) 471-2031. . . In the early stages of its development, **Q*Bert** wasn't the passive wimp he is today. Prototype versions of this classic cubehopper allowed players to shoot it out with the bizarre cast of opponents. What was the weapon, you ask? Why, snot balls of course! No kidding. . . A number of game manufacturers are currently looking for new game ideas! We can't promise anything, but if you have a concept that you feel would appeal to game players send it along to our Torrance address and we'll make sure they get it. . . Look for a special surprise here in the next issue of **Top Score**. Until then, remember that there are only 280 shopping days left before we reach November 7: the **APA's National Play A Video Game Day!**

— Quartermann

SCRAMBLED SEQUELS

Think you know a lot about video games? Fortune (and a fair amount of good looks) await those of you who do in this special **Top Score** contest open to members of the **Amusement Players Association**.

With original and exciting game themes becoming harder to come by, many manufacturers have turned to established, proven play concepts to attract interest. As part of an upcoming article on the subject of sequel and remake games, we asked **Woody McCoy**, our roving reporter, to send us a list of his ten favorite sequel titles. As Woody sent the list over his computer, the game names turned into scrambled gibberish: **PESUR CUNPH-TOU**. After a lot of rearranging, we deduced that what he had really written was **SUPER PUNCH-OUT**, the exciting sequel to the original **Punch-Out** game.

We need your assistance to help us unscramble the remaining nine video game titles. If you can successfully rearrange the following nine monikers you could win \$25 in free plays at your favorite gaming location as well as a complete assortment of video and pin T-Shirts, hats, posters and other promotional items.

Unscramble these nine games. Remember, they are all sequels to hit coin-op videos.

1. ZEFRNY	4. LIDEMIELP	7. RUPES AMOIR SROB
2. GRESTATA	5. YEPRH SOTRPS	8. PUERS NAZOXX
3. RABESTL	6. TOVIRCY DORA	9. DIROSETAS LUDEXE

Send your entry on a postcard to:

Top Score Trivia Contest
P.O. Box 1558
Torrance, California 90505

All entries must be received by April 1, 1987 to be eligible. In the event of two or more correct submissions, a winner will be drawn at random by an appointed representative of the APA. All decisions of the judges and the APA are final. Void where prohibited. The APA is not responsible for postal delays which prevent your entry from reaching us in time. The \$25 in free plays are paid directly to the player.

VOID WHERE PROHIBITED BY LAW

BEHIND THE SCREENS

AT

Bally Midway

Does the name **Galaxian** ring a bell? Maybe **Pac-Man**? Or perhaps **Galaga!** These are just a few of the unquestionable hits that have come from one of America's leading game manufacturers, **Bally/Midway**.

While attending the 1986 Pinball Expo back in Chicago, the **Top Score** staff had a chance to tour the Bally production facilities. What we saw was more than just another video game/pinball company, but a close knit group of engineers and designers who have their finger on the pulse of today's players; radiating an unstoppable creative energy that was impossible to ignore.

John Flakne, VP of Public Relations (who was largely responsible for the highly successful **Masters Tournament**) and Tom Locke, top sales representative, gave us the grand tour, and you better believe the keyword here is grand! Both of these senior executives proudly explained the history of their company and how Bally has managed to retain its reputation as a leader in the game industry.

Since its inception in the early part of the

'30's, Bally has enjoyed great success in a variety of fields. Originally producing no-flipper pin games (a multitude of bumper nails and a few holes on a wooden playfield) by the thousands, Bally (like their major competitors **Gottlieb** and **Genco**) switched to flipper games in 1948 after the tremendous acceptance of **Gottlieb's Humpty Dumpty**. Arcade classics like **Wizard** and **Captain Fantastic** kept Bally in the forefront of the market for decades, until the video invasion was unleashed in 1978 with, appropriately enough, **Space Invaders**.

Bally's version of the **Taito** classic **Space Invaders** captivated players everywhere with its mesmerizing heart beat and fast action game play. **Space Invaders** was the ultimate high-tech target shoot, ushering in the age of Man vs. Machine.

Even devote pinball enthusiasts, the staple of the coin-operated amusement industry for decades, couldn't resist the allure of this classic. Soon after, Bally released **Space Invaders Deluxe**, the high-powered follow-up to the original invasion game. With even more exciting features, this sequel quickly shot to the top of the charts!

With a firm foothold on the video game market, Bally followed up their two-part invasion saga with the bird-men of **Galaxian** and the dot-munching **Pac-Man**.

Pac-Man was a social phenomenon that opened up thousands of locations to video games. Everywhere you could find some extra space you could usually find a **Pac-Man** game. In laundromats, convenience stores, and supermarkets, **Pac-Man** machines found new homes, much to the delight of players everywhere. Tom Locke proudly recalled the good old days of the "video game boom" when delivery trucks would line up ten deep, waiting to load up **Pac-Man** machines for thousands of operators and arcades around the world.

Today Bally has diversified into other fields beyond the coin-op entertainment field. Beyond their current acquisition of Las Vegas Casinos, Bally recently began production of a line of advanced physical fitness machines. The machines incorporate video screens to graphically display your progress, making exercise interactive and fun. For example, one scene depicts a canoe race, and, as you pedal faster, the rower on the screen moves more swiftly, often passing by fellow oarsmen. This visual feedback is both rewarding and interesting to watch!

The Bally/Midway Manufacturing plant is divided into three sections for the three product lines: video games, pinball, and exercise machines. Workers are given a single task to perform on each assembly line. For instance,

one worker might insert the game board into the back of a machine while another is responsible for inserting the marquee to the top of the cabinet. The machine gradually makes its way down the line, growing and taking shape both inside and out, until it is ready for packaging and loading. From here the game is shipped to a distributor, where it becomes available to your local arcade or street operator.

This assembly line process continues until the quota is met. Soon a new game will take over the line, with some of the line workers retrained to assemble new products. This efficient operation is only part of Bally's commitment to producing only the most reliable new games.

As our tour guides led us through the pinball production lines we admired row upon row of partially completed **Strange Science** pinball machines as well as a number of unique prototypes. Besides an unfinished version of **Bally's** upcoming "**Hard Body**," there was also an odd machine that boasted no less than ten pairs of flippers and an equal number of balls. The flippers were continually actuated automatically, sending the balls soaring about the playfield. Before embarrassing ourselves by trying to play the game, John Flakne explained that the machine was dedicated to testing flippers and actuating coils. This machine operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Periodically the flipper wear is analyzed and the life of the flipper coil is recorded. This process allows Bally to produce only the highest quality products while enabling engineers to discover better designs to enhance the durability of the games.

Bally's most recent releases include the video game **Power Drive**, a high energy machine that was recently featured in the 1986 North American Tournament of Champions competition, and **Strange Science**, voted the Best Pinball of the 1986 AMOA convention.

There is nothing "strange" about Bally/Midway's success. Their commitment to pride, quality, and creative excellence is always the number one priority. By producing only the best of the best, Bally has earned a well-deserved position as a leader in the coin-op industry, producing games that are respected by players throughout the world.

SPECIAL NEXT ISSUE

In the next edition of the **Top Score** Newsletter you'll find a complete tour of Bally/Midway's sister-company, **Bally/Sente**. We'll talk with the programmers and designers of hit games like **Night Stocker** and **Street Football**. Special, in the next **Behind the Screens** segment.

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COIN-OP TOP TEN
(Effective 02/01/86)

VIDEO GAMES

Dedicated

1. Sega's OUT RUN
2. Atari's SUPER SPRINT
3. Sega's ENDURORACER
4. Atari's 720°
5. Tradewest's IRARI WARRIORS
6. Sega's HANG-ON
7. Bally/Midway's RAMPAGE
8. Atari's GAUNTLET (4 Player)
9. Cinematronic's WORLD SERIES
10. Data East's SPEED BUGGY

* Software *

1. Atari's CHAMPIONSHIP SPRINT
2. Capcom's LEGENDARY WINGS
3. Atari's GAUNTLET II
4. Romstar's ARKANOID
5. Bally/Sente's STREET FOOTBALL
6. Memetron's MANIA CHALLENGE
7. Romstar's SIDEARMS
8. Taito's RENEGADE
9. Nintendo's SUPER MARIO BROS.
10. Capcom's SPEED RUMBLER

PINBALL

1. William's PIN-BOT
2. William's HIGH SPEED
3. Premier's GOLD WINGS
4. Bally/Midway's STRANGE SCIENCE
5. William's COMET
6. Premier's HOLLYWOOD HEAT
7. Premier's GENESIS
8. William's ROAD KINGS
9. William's SPACE SHUTTLE
10. Bally/Midway's 8-BALL DELUXE

The Coin-Op Top Ten is reprinted with permission from **RePlay** magazine, one of the industry's leading trade publications.

Calendar
of Events

***** COMPETITIONS *****

March 30 - April 26, 1987

Shakey's S. Californian Championships
Participating Shakey's Pizza Parlors

Tournament play on a variety of video games crowning top players at individual store locations. Contest culminates in a series of play offs May 1-2. Sponsored by **Games Unlimited** and sanctioned by the U.S. National Video Game Team.

May 1-3, 1987

AMOA 1987 National Team Dart Tournament
Ramada Inn O'Hare
Chicago, Illinois

National finals in the team dart throwing competition. All participants must be sponsored by an AMOA dart league member.

May 23-25, 1987

Archanid 1987 Bullshooter II National Finals
Rosemont Ramada Inn
Chicago, Illinois

National tournament on the Archanid brand dart game crowning top national players. \$50,000 purse to be divided among top men and women competitors.

June 26-28, 1987

1987 Video Game Masters Tournament
Annual competition on 100 of the top video games of all time. High scores to be submitted to the editors of the **Guinness Book of World Records** for possible publication in the 1988 edition of the facts and figures book. More details to come in a future issue of **Top Score**.

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November 20-22, 1987

Flip-Out '87 Pinball Tournament
O'Hare/Kennedy Holiday Inn
Rosemont, Illinois

Second edition of this annual competition coincides with the **1987 Pinball Expo**. Top winners will compete for a coin-operated pinball machine.

***** CONVENTIONS *****

March 20-22, 1987

American Coin Machine Expo

The Rivergate

New Orleans, Louisiana

Display of new coin-operated amusements, including video games, pinball machines, cranes and other novelty equipment.

November 20-22, 1987

Pinball Expo '87
O'Hare/Kennedy Holiday Inn
Rosemont, Illinois

Convention for pinball collectors and enthusiasts. A wide selection of exhibits include older pin games, limited production pins as well as a variety of pinball-related merchandise. Attendees also receive a guided tour of a major pinball production facility. For more information contact Expo chairman Robert Berk at 2671 Youngstown Rd., SE, Warren, Ohio 44484 or call (216) 369-1192.

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Like snowflakes and fingerprints, no two arcades are exactly the same. Although they may contain the same games, different environments make certain locations especially popular, affording a unique personality and style that attracts players and creates a competitive atmosphere. **Our 'Cades** is devoted to locating these outstanding game rooms; arcades that promote a positive image and have led players to higher scores...

In the last issue, I, Woody McCoy, video game player extraordinaire, reported from LA's **Captain Video** arcade center. Needless to say, I spent several hours and a few quarters playing my favorite games after completing my assignment for **Top Score**. The place should have been called **Captive Video**, however, for it seems I missed my flight to an important rendezvous off the coast of Japan where it was rumored that the world's largest arcade resides. But, due to my extended stay at Captain's, I'll have to wait for the next flight... scheduled to leave in just over 13 hours!

Never being the type to give into despair, I decided that I would seek out just one more arcade in the near vicinity, promising myself that I would watch time more closely.

So I hopped into my reconditioned pre-owned vehicle and ventured down Pacific Coast Highway, in search of an arcade worthy of the presence of Woody McCoy. El Segundo, Manhattan Beach, no luck! I turned south and drove for miles (I thought I'd end up in San Diego), until a very strange image appeared in the distance: two large hands, fingers poised over the controls of an enormous video game! I wiped my eyes, momentarily relieving my terminal case of technovision, but the outline of the huge hands became even more defined! But, as I drew closer, I realized that my eyes had not deceived me, the video game rendition was really a wall mural that covers the side of the **Hermosa Penny Arcade** in Hermosa Beach.

I pulled over as the large hands seemingly drew me inside. A vast array of electronic sounds poured out of the arcade as players lined up to enter. I knew that this place was special!

The **Hermosa Penny Arcade** boasts about 25 video games, a half a dozen pins, a pool table, and a number of comfortable stools for the avid player. Though the arcade at first seems relatively small in comparison with other game centers, the **Hermosa** arcade is always the first on the block to showcase the latest new game releases.

As I work myself around the crowds of people gathered around Sega's **Hang-On**, I bumped into **Dale Moore**, owner of the location.

Dale has a unique philosophy that guarantees results. Not only does the arcade keep up to date on all the new games, Dale respects his clientele and, in turn, players return regularly.

HOME GAMING SUPPLEMENT NO. 1

SUPERIOR HOME GAMING PRODUCTS ON DISPLAY AT WINTER CES

Imaginative Games and Innovative Software Draw Enthusiastic Crowds to Annual Convention

Hundreds of manufacturers from around the world gathered January 8-11, 1987 in the city that never sleeps, Las Vegas, to display a diverse selection of goods at the annual **Winter Consumer Electronics Show (CES)**. Anything and everything even remotely connected with consumer electronics, from instructional video tapes to hand held copiers, was represented at this definitive exhibition.

The spacious Las Vegas Convention Center as well as a trio of hotels played host to over 100,000 visitors intent of viewing the latest and most innovative new technologies. In addition to the enumerable stereo and VCR displays, a number of computer and home gaming company's made sure that everyone in attendance knew that video games were back — and better than ever before!

Led by **Nintendo of America**, the domestic arm of the leading producer of home video games in Japan, no less than a dozen manufacturers were on hand with their compatible wares; titles that include the best that the arcades have to offer.

Nintendo offered a sample of new products to come in the form of four new sports packs as well as a captivating new adventure game, **The Legend of Zelda**. While the sports games, which include such familiar titles as **Punch-Out!!** (revamped version of arcade classic features extra rounds of play and additional boxers not in the original), **Slalom** (identical to the coin-op, albeit the foot controller), as well as **Volleyball** and **Pro Wrestling**.

Supporting the **Nintendo Entertainment System**, manufactureres such as **Data East (Karate Champ)**, **Konami (Rush-N-Attack)**, **SNK (Ikari Warriors)**, and **Capcom (Ghosts & Goblins, Commando, Trojan, and 1942)** each displayed excellent versions of their coin-op hits. In addition, **Bandai America**, the makers of **M.U.S.C.L.E.** and **Chubby Cherub** (both for the **NES**) had a very inventive (and very interactive!) floopad controller that, when com-



The Winter Consumer Electronics Show - Gateway to the world of Electronics and Technology.

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bined with the accompanying game cartridge (a variety of sprinting, jumping, and ducking exercises) make the Jane Fonda Workout seem like a walk around the block! Keep your eye out for this item when it hits store shelves later this year.

Rounding out the selection of **NES** equipment was a very intriguing piece of hardware engineered by the creative designers at **Nintendo**. Aimed indirectly at the female portion of the family, this unique item enables you to actually create elaborate designs and transfer them into yarn weavings (which, in turn, can become pillows, blankets, etc.). The applications may be limited, but the product is a shining example of their tremendous consumer support. Expect to read more about this in a future issue of **Top Score**.

The other big kid on the home systems block, **Sega**, also made quite an impression at the Winter CES. Boasting a number of exciting game titles as well as a wide variety of peripherals, the **Sega** system had everyone looking twice at a unit that is finally coming into its own.



At the Nintendo Booth, Suzanne Schemm models with the Nintendo Entertainment System, and a variety of other peripherals.

Although **Sega** is currently debating over the future of third party licensed software for their machine (a proven selling point of the **NES**), they did have previews of many upcoming products developed in-house.

Interactivity is held with high regard at **Sega**, apparent from the introduction of almost a half a dozen new controllers that interchange with the standard flat pad controller. Besides the more conventional two button joysticks, the **Sega** system also has a track-ball **Sports-Controller** and a very inventive knob controller (for use with a new **Arkanoid**-ish game coming soon) on the way.

Players who had trouble finding a larger selection of carts and cards earlier in the year will be pleasantly surprised by the broad array of games due out this year. In addition to securing the rights to a pair of Sylvester Stallone movie hits (**Rambo, First Blood Part II** and **Rocky**), **Sega** also had previews of video game translations of the **Ghostbusters** computer game and arcade favorites like **Fantasy Zone**, **Wonder Boy**, **Quartet**, and **My Hero**. Also, **Mark Cerney** (the creator of the coin-op hits **Major Havoc** and



THE NINTENDO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM

HOT NEW GAME OF THE YEAR

With its revolutionary design, innovative games, and interactive peripherals, the Nintendo Entertainment System has won the hearts of video game enthusiasts around the world. With its introduction and subsequent acceptance by players throughout North America, many are already heralding the Nintendo unit as the best home gaming system ever released!

In the beginning there was the **Atari 2600** and **Mattel Intellivision**, two first-generation gaming machines that spawned the home gaming revolution. Then came the **Atari 5200** and **ColecoVision**, each boasting superior graphics and sound capabilities. Both of these units filled the second step on the evolutionary ladder with increased memory and game play that approached the quality of their arcade counterparts. All you've come to expect from programmable systems, however, is about to be shattered with the introduction of the first truly **third-generation** home game, the **Nintendo Entertainment System (NES)**.

The word "innovative" takes on a new meaning when you're talking about the NES. It combines state-of-the-art animation, rich musical accompaniment and two specially designed microchips to create the best games ever seen at home.

All of these features add up to make the NES the system to watch in the months to come. Its appearance is unlike anything you've seen before. Its compact size and sleek design surpasses everything we've seen before, in terms

of both attractiveness and versatility.

The exterior of the handsome black and grey unit measures about 10" x 8" x 3," with exceptional definition that's not too crowded. On the front of the unit are two soft-touch buttons: one turns the system on and off while the other resets a particular game. Also on the front of the NES are two controller ports that are easily accessible, each one specially formed with recessed interface pins to prevent any accidental damage (a common problem with the old 2600). A hinged door tops off the NES, with a unique loading mechanism protecting the carts and insuring simple game start-up.

Setting Up The System

Connecting the NES control deck to the TV is outlined very carefully in the manual that comes with the system. Two alternative methods of connecting the NES to the TV are discussed, with appropriate cables and links included to perform both types of connections. By following the detailed illustrations that demonstrate the correct set-up procedures, it is possible to have



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The Nintendo Entertainment System.

your NES up and running in less than 15 minutes. All you need is a screwdriver to attach the converters, everything else, including the RF switch is made to screw together. Both the AC adapter and the RF modulator plug into the back of the NES console.

Examining The Controllers

The NES controllers are totally unique to the consumer market, essentially duplicating the basic layout of Nintendo's coin-op **VS. System**. Each controller measures 5" x 2" x 5/8" and features an eight direction pad, two red buttons, and appropriate "select" and "start" push buttons. Each controller comes equipped with a 7½ foot cable so that you can play almost anywhere in the room.

The NES controller, which handles like an old Intellivision disc pad during play, takes a little getting used to if you're used to using an Atari VCS joystick. Although you may long for the more conventional sticks when you load up your first game, becoming accustomed to the flat directional pads is not as difficult as you might think. Unfortunately, the size and shape of the controller port prohibits any instinctive joystick swapping. But, on the bright side, the NES controllers are interchangeable which means we may see some true joysticks for the NES, either from Nintendo or a third party company, in the near future.

Arcade Quality Games

Even the greatest of the home gaming systems have failed due to the lack of consumer support. After all, you might ask, how good is a gaming machine if you don't have good games to play on it?

Well, with the NES you need not worry.

The NES is really a step above most common home games, crossing the threshold into the



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world of coin-op units. Granted, there are no coin slots, but the NES is just as capable of playing the high-tech games we've grown to love in the arcades. With specialized computer chips controlling the superb graphics and sound effects, the NES has set a new standard which all future games will be compared to.

After being on store shelves for less than a year, the NES has already developed an impressive library of games. While fans of arcade games will quickly recognize favorites like **Donkey Kong**, **Mario Bros.**, and **Hogan's Alley**, the NES boasts a selection of carts which include never-before-seen titles like **Wild Gunman** and **Urban Champion**. There's even an educational game for younger members of the family called **Donkey Kong Jr. Math**. And, when you combine the current group of Nintendo games with the carts being offered by third-party companies like **Capcom**, **Data East**, **Konami**, and **Bandai**, the variety of excitement and number of games is unequalled. Most of the carts will sell for \$25-\$30 range, except for specialty products like **Bandai's Family Fitness** floorpad series and the upcoming **Nintendo Knitting Machine** which will retail a bit higher.

Expansion

Unlike many other gaming systems which are developed primarily around existing technologies, the NES gives owners a lot of room to grow. Not only are there several peripherals currently available, Nintendo (as well as Bandai) are already testing additional interactive hardware.

The **Zapper**, designed for use with the Light Gun series of games, is a highly accurate light-sensing video gun that is available separately from the main game console, or as part of a discounted Deluxe Set. The Zapper has built-in

light sensors that interact with flashes of light from the TV screen to determine the outcome of play. The device is highly accurate to within a fraction of an inch (even when fired from as far as 15 feet from the screen), making the Nintendo target shoot games a true test of reflex and marksmanship.

The same photosensors that pilot the Zapper are used in another NES add-on: **R.O.B.**, the Robotic Operating Buddy. R.O.B. is a ten-inch robot that reacts to commands sent by the player via the TV. The light signals are read by R.O.B. who then performs the appropriate movements. The two games that utilize the robot; **Gyro-Mite** and **Stack-Up**, require R.O.B. to maneuver objects from position to position to score points on-screen.

Special attachments come with each robot game. These pieces fit into grooves molded into the base of R.O.B., insuring the appropriate amount of space between movement positions. Basically, R.O.B. has a limited field of movement which permits him to turn left or right five positions, raise his arms up or down five positions, and open or close his "hands." He's a bit noisy but he is portable, running off of four "AA" size batteries.

The two games that are now available for use with R.O.B. are both excellent brain teasers. Although the pace of the games is not quite as fast as **Super Mario Bros.**, they do require a lot of forethought and strategy to master. Both **Gyro-Mite** and **Stack-Up** demonstrate all of R.O.B.'s basic abilities, as he moves objects around different trays. It may not sound thrilling, but it is a lot of fun commanding R.O.B. in each of the different game settings.

Nintendo has only touched the tip of the iceberg with the first two R.O.B.-compatible

carts. Hopefully, future introductions into the robot series will utilize the capabilities of R.O.B. in more fast-action scenarios. But for now R.O.B. is a good addition to the NES that should appeal to everyone in the family.

The Future

Since its introduction in Japan several years ago, the NES has captured over 95% of that country's home video game market. With over 8,000,000 units sold (that's one for every four people!), the support from outside companies in Japan is truly phenomenal! With such a wide assortment of titles to choose from, Nintendo has guaranteed a constant flow of new product for the NES in the coming years. Both strategy/adventure games which could not find their way into arcades (like the soon-to-be-released **Legend of Zelda**) and the best that the coin-ops have to offer (like recent releases **Gradius**, **Trojan**, and **Punch-Out!!**) will be on store shelves, sitting next to software from other coin-op game manufacturers.

Any way you look at it, the Nintendo Entertainment System is an excellent video game machine. Its superior graphics resolution rivals anything seen in the arcades, complete with 3-D images and movement that creates a convincing depth of field. Also, with the current availability of add-on peripherals like the Zapper and R.O.B., and the promise of additional devices in the future, the variety of game playing is nothing less than outstanding!

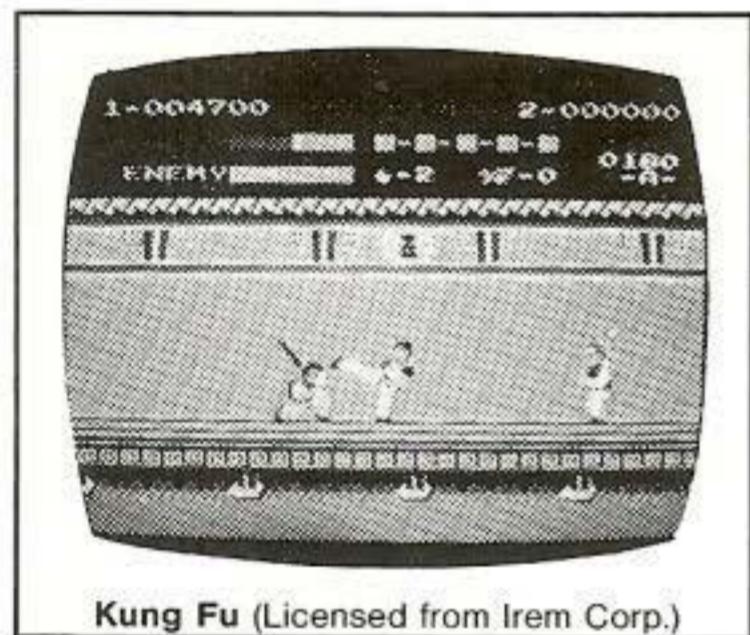
The future of home video gaming looks bright and promising thanks to the debut of this hot new unit. The Nintendo Entertainment System is the closest thing to true arcade action that we've ever seen. With its high-tech design and quality games, the NES is the ideal gaming system both now and in the future.

TWO PICK-HITS FOR THE NINTENDO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM

One of the biggest and most attractive features of the Nintendo Entertainment System is the large library of game titles currently available. In fact, twenty-seven game cartridges are now on the store shelves; quite an accomplishment when you consider that the unit has been in wide release for less than a year.

To make the selection of games easier for players, Nintendo has wisely grouped their carts into different series. The principle titles can be found in any one of eight categories: robot series (for use with R.O.B.), light gun series (to use with the operational light gun), programmable series (games which let players design their own playfields), sports, action, adventure, arcade classics, as well as education. Each series contains a number of exciting games, many of which will be familiar to coin-op players everywhere.

To get a feel for just how good the NES games really are, we provided members of the **U.S. National Video Game Team** with a sample cart from each of the separate categories. As you'll discover when you read the accompanying reviews, the team members not only enjoyed the NES game paks, in many cases they gave them higher praise than the coin-op games on which they're based.



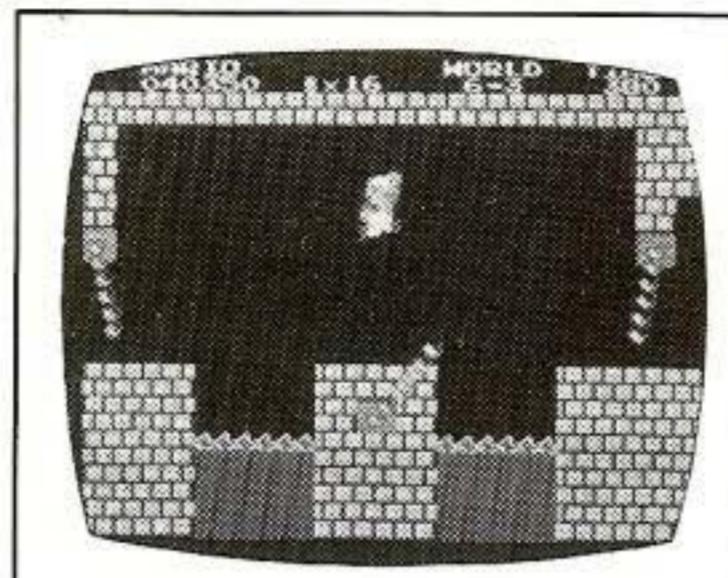
Kung Fu (Licensed from Irem Corp.)

Although the names may be different, the games aren't. **Kung Fu** for the NES is really that super-smash coin-op game from **Data East**, **Kung Fu Master**. Despite the loss of part of the title, **Kung Fu** is a fantastic reproduction of its arcade counterpart, complete with all the martial arts techniques, and all the villains that made the original so entertaining.

The game play is virtually identical to the coin-op version. Assuming the role of a brave kung fu expert named Thomas, players must fight off an endless supply of bad guys in a five-story mansion to reach a "boss" who guards the exit to each particular floor. If Thomas can survive the attacks and defeat the main villain he is awarded bonus points and play proceeds to the next level where additional dangers await.

With a few minor exceptions, the NES **Kung Fu** is every bit as good as Data East's arcade game. It's not surprising, however, since both games came from the same Japanese manufacturer: **Irem Corp.** Luckily, Irem has held true to their original concept, retaining all the elements of game play as well as the exceptional animation and musical backdrop. **Kung Fu** is a rock-em, sock-em, action-packed winner.

★ ★ ★ 1 (out of a possible four stars)



Super Mario Bros.

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In Japan, **Super Mario Bros.** is the reigning king of the video game world. Similar to the **Pac-Man** craze that swept this country, **Super Mario** commands a high profile on everything from underwear to lunch boxes and was even the focus of a full length animated motion picture based on the game. With millions of **Super Mario Bros.** game carts sold in that country, it's not hard to see why a strategy book outlining various methods of play recently became a number one best seller!

For the rest of the world, however, our first glimpse of the new Mr. Mario came by way of the arcades. The coin-op version of **Super Mario** attracted a loyal following almost immediately, and later went on to become the top **VS. System** game for Nintendo.

It's difficult to compare the NES adaptation of **Super Mario Bros.** to the coin-op release since they are, for the most part, the same game. The arcade transition came after the release of the home game. To cut down on game time Nintendo simply edited certain portions of the terrain to increase the difficulty and insert a big point ending.

Super Mario Bros. is a near-perfect game, boasting simple play mechanics and hundreds of incentives that have proven appeal. Hidden surprises and an ever-changing environment, combined with an exciting rescue mission, make **Super Mario** a fun-filled adventure for all ages.

Colorful graphics and music are skillfully blended into the creative storyline to give the game additional appeal. A must-have cart for any NES owner.

★ ★ ★ ★

Look for reviews of additional NES games in the next issue of *Top Score*, including recent releases from Capcom, Bandai and other third party sources.

CONSUMER ELECTRONICS SHOW

(continued from front cover)

Marble Madness), game extraordinaire, brought his own brand of arcade action to home with a pair of titles that are played in **3-D!** Special glasses accompany the cart and make the action jump right off the screen! Both **Wall-Ball** (futuristic racquetball for either one or two players) and the as-yet-untitled space shoot-em-up demonstrate the three-dimensional capabilities of the system to their utmost. Thumbs up Mark!

"...the new 3-D games come with special glasses that make the action jump right off the screen..."

The patriarch of the home gaming field, **Atari**, received excellent reception to their new line of **XT** computers. Look for an in-focus segment on this new generation of computer in a future issue.

The **Atari 7800**, meanwhile, debuted several game titles that borrowed themes or game play from popular computer software like **One on One** and **Summer Games**. It remains to be seen, however, if the **7800** will ever gain the widespread acceptance that its predecessor, the **2600**, enjoyed during the last decade. Original cartridges were also unveiled, however, making the **7800** and even better investment for the pro gamer in the family.

For the thousands of **Intellivision** owners around the world, **INTV**, a new California-based company, unveiled a new line of **Intellivision**-compatible cartridges which includes such familiar fare as **Pac-Man** and **Pole Position**, arcade titles that the **Intellivision** has been in need of for some time. **INTV** also in manufacturing a new generation of **Intellivisions** under the guise of **Intellivision III**. Although the visual and audio quality may not compare with the more recent home systems being introduced, price and game play more than make up for any cosmetic shortcomings.

The 1987 Winter Consumer Electronic Show brought out the best of the home video game and entertainment field. And, with a wide assortment of products filling store shelves in the coming months, it'll be hard for anyone to deny the fact that video and computer games are back at home with a vengeance.



Lovely Robin Trowbridge poses with Konami's NES super-hit, **Rush-N-Attack**.

Gaming Tip 101: For highest scores jump over hazards and find hidden bonuses. Also, try to avoid the killer bees until the last possible moment (scoring points as you go) before entering one of the four skateparks. If you're having a good game when you lose your skater, don't forget that you can drop in another coin to continue (up to two more times).

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Each side is given four downs to com touchdown before the ball changes poss With the snap of the pigskin (or is tha ball) the receivers head out while the oth starts a five-count before rushing. With pump fake, the quarterback can follow with a pass to anywhere on the p Distance and height are determined by as well as how long the "pass" b depressed.

ATARI'S
720°

THE ULTIMATE
AERIAL EXPERIENCE. . .

720°, the ultimate skateboarding maneuver, is an amazing double revolution performed in mid-air, and perfected by only the best. This daring trick is only part of the excitement of **720°**, the new high-action adventure from **Atari Games** where you become a skater in a fantasy world with both competitive and freestyle skating techniques.

Game play begins in the heart of **Skate City**, a surrealistic world inhabited by the most outrageous characters ever seen in a video game! Portraying a world-class skater, players must perform a variety of skating maneuvers over the ever-changing surfaces which comprise Skate City. Skillful skating techniques award tickets to the city parks where additional challenges await as players compete against the clock for gold, silver, and bronze medals. Cash prizes, presented along with the medals, can be used to buy extra skating equipment that improves overall performance.

An innovative rotary control adds a new dimension to the **720°** experience, allowing skaters to duplicate a number of competitive techniques. A "kick" button is used to keep the action moving within the scrolling playfield while a "jump" button is used in tandem with the joystick to perform complex aerial stunts.

The depth of the **720°** environment is unparalleled, bringing forth a wide array of strategies. Point values for each skating stunt are determined by their risk and the skater's ability to come down on all four wheels.

720° is unquestionably the most competitive video game ever designed, challenging players with an endless and ever-changing layout. Customizing features enable pro players to increase their skating abilities, while the four skating parks (Ramp, Slalom, Jump, and Downhill) showcase everyone's talents! Exceptional graphics and animation, as well as custom music scores, sound effects, and speech make **720°** a tour-de-force in video game entertainment!

Gaming Tip 101: For highest scores jump over hazards and find hidden bonuses. Also, try to avoid the killer bees until the last possible moment (scoring points as you go) before entering one of the four skateparks. If you're having a good game when you lose your skater, don't forget that you can drop in another coin to continue (up to two more times).

BALLY/SENTE'S STREET FOOTBALL

GO OUT FOR A PASS —
BEHIND THE CHEVY.

Through the use of modern technology and superior video game engineering, **Bally/Sente's** latest, **Street Football**, brings to life the hazards and highlights of a challenging game of tag football played on a busy suburban road.

Unlike traditional football games that are usually found in the arcades (titles which duplicate the sport of professional ball on the grid iron), **Street Football** is patterned after the game we all play as kids.

Game action takes place on a busy street, with a variety of challenges affecting the outcome of each play. Players are represented by teams of three athletes which are controlled by a track-ball and an accompanying "pass" but-

ton. Players can select which on-screen character they want to maneuver by using the ball and button. One coin allows for play against the computer, while additional coins can buy more time or allow for head-to-head competition between two players.

Each side is given four downs to complete a touchdown before the ball changes possession. With the snap of the pigskin (or is that a Nerf ball) the receivers head out while the other team starts a five-count before rushing. With a quick pump fake, the quarterback can follow through with a pass to anywhere on the playfield. Distance and height are determined by the ball as well as how long the "pass" button is depressed.

A series of random events take place throughout the game play. Cars and trucks drive unexpectedly down the street, kids appear on bicycles, dogs dash out of buildings to bark and chase team members, or characters may fall through open manholes.

Colorful graphics bring the game to life with vivid animation and background visuals that scroll to create the illusion of movement. Detailed audio effects accompany the action and really liven up the game!

Street Football has all the entertaining features found in games boasting the **Bally/Sente** name. The fast-paced play, combined with the whimsical storyline, create a game that has all the makings of a winner. Even though football season may be over, you can be a part of the fun and excitement that is **Street Football** any time of the year! Look for it where you play games!

Gaming Tip 102: Remember that you can change control of your three team members by rolling the ball in the direction of that athlete. Also, for greater height on your passes, simply press and hold the "pass" button.



BALLY/MIDWAY'S STRANGE SCIENCE

STRANGE...
STRANGE...STRANGE...

Strange Science, the new pinball in Bally/Midway's "The Next Trend" line, was voted "The Best Pinball Game of the 1986 AMOA Expo" by the **U.S. National Video Game Team**. One look at this high-powered entry will tell you why. With a theme straight from a '30's science fiction movie and a playfield to match, **Strange Science** is pinball action at its best!

The mad doctor/transformation theme is reflected throughout the backglass and playfield. The game boasts a number of skill shots and assorted targets ranging from a split level laboratory to an Atom Generator that builds up scores and stores up to five balls(!) for multi-ball play.

The opening shot from the plunger delivers

the ball into play by way of a ramp shot into the lab. A trio of drop holes introduce the silver above three lanes,* selected by the player. Lighting all lanes increases the bonus multiplier and opens up several other scoring incentives.

The left portion of the playfield houses a super-charged Atom Smasher that captures atoms (balls) as they're introduced into the device. Up to five balls can be held captive in the Atom Smasher before they're released simultaneously for extremely high scores and a larger multiplier bonus. Balls can be released from below with a well placed shot that will send them along a special rail, dropping them back into play on the right side of the field.

Various other targets include S-T-R-A-N-G-E and S-C-I-E-N-C-E bullseyes, a pair of thumper bumpers directly below the L-A-B lanes, and an innovative "Power-Saver" (activated by way of an additional button below the left flipper button) that can knock a drained ball back into play.

The backglass art is highly detailed and highlights the theme of the game perfectly. The multi-colored glass (as well as the playfield) features a mad doctor and his simian playmate and is capped off with a bolt of neon lightning.

Strange Science continues the long and successful line of Bally pins that have entertained players for years. By combining winning elements from a number of titles and tossing in a variety of unique and highly inventive features, Bally/Midway has produced yet another high quality pin with **Strange Science**.

Gaming Tip 103: Try to load up all the atoms (balls) as quickly as possible. Releasing the atoms affords the highest scores. After releasing any trapped balls, do your best to keep all of them in play for as long as possible to retain the higher multiplier bonus.



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CINEMATRONICS' DANGER ZONE

GET YOUR HANDS ON
REAL COMBAT ACTION. . .

The border's been jittery for weeks. Wild rumors of enemy invasions have run rampant. Your frontline defense post has been on full alert for days while the tensions mount. . .

That's the scenario behind the latest and most innovative game release from San Diego-based **Cinematronics**. **Danger Zone** is the name of this anti-aircraft simulation that puts you in the middle of hot warfare action! Invading warplanes ranging from fighters to helicopters to bombers advance on the player's position above an allied desert camp. Using a variety of strafing maneuvers, the enemy planes proceed over mountains and rain from the sky in an effort to drop their explosives on the friendly base.

Players, however, are not totally defenseless to the fierce attacks. Utilizing an inventive gun turret assembly that pivots both left-right and up-down, anti-aircraft commanders are given several defenses against the invaders. Players can fill the skies with hot lead at a rate of 60 rounds per second, sending in-coming fighters crashing to the ground and exploding hostile choppers into fiery debris. Back-up weapons include twin cannons to fire homing missiles, and a defensive radar which easily locates any air-borne objects along the perimeter of the mountain ridge.

The real treat in playing **Danger Zone** comes from the physical interaction needed to line up enemy aircraft and nuclear missiles. The ingenious design of the **Danger Zone** cabinet is perfectly suited for the game; it really makes you feel like you're in control of the outcome of every wave of attack. The great attraction of the cabinet lifts this superior effort above other shoot-em-up contests and into the files of other hit simulator games recently introduced. The scrolling animation is superb and the game play guaranteed to work up a sweat in even the best players! **Danger Zone** is not only an engineering masterpiece, it's an exhilarating experience well deserving of its thumbs-up reviews.

Gaming Tip 104: Allow the nukes to appear in the early rounds for bonus points. Even though you'll lose your damage bonus, the high value of the nukes will more than compensate for this loss. To eliminate aircraft, merely strafe the general area of the in-coming planes.

ON THE HORIZON

WILLIAMS'
MILLIONAIRE
ANOTHER

ANOTHER WINNING GEM. . .

"Impressive," "Innovative," and "Exciting" are but a few of the descriptions that have become synonymous with the legendary pinball producer, **Williams Electronics**. With recent hits like **High Speed**, **Comet**, and **Pin-Bot** under their belt, Williams has unveiled their latest tour-de-force, **Millionaire**. Boasting a new variety of skill shots and related targets, **Millionaire** carries all the proven playfield incentives and high-point scoring goals that have become the Williams trademark.

The playfield of **Millionaire** is indeed precious, complete with a well rounded selection of targets and lights as well as the ever-popular multi-ball play. By capturing balls during multi-ball play, high score bonuses can be claimed along with Ruby, Emerald, and Diamond values. This adds another perspective to play that makes the action even more intense.

Center-stage on the **Millionaire** playfield is the remarkable "Wheel of Riches," a roulette-type of mechanism that awards a variety of spectacular winnings like thousands in cash, extra ball, specials, and automatic multi-ball! There's also a moving ball guide that, when a shot is timed correctly, will send the ball into a sparkling gold mine. Here, players can increase multiplier bonuses and claim gold and silver prizes valued up to 100,000 points.

The theme of **Millionaire** is also supported with attractive backglass art and vocal embellishments that outline the action and add humor to the game.

Millionaire is yet another winner for Williams! The targets are spaced evenly and the new "Wheel of Riches" provides additional elements of surprise and excitement! Good theme, good playfield, and good execution make **Millionaire** a great game!

Gaming Tip 105: For the highest scores in **Millionaire** do your best to play into the higher levels to secure the more valuable gems and hot-shot bonuses. Learn the appropriate times to release the ball in the opening skill shot so that it enters the gold mine. Not only will this increase your multiplier bonus, it will generate up to 100,000 extra points per shot.

PLAYER PROFILE

JIM VOLANDT
&
MIKE WARD



JIM VOLANDT

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A *Candid Talk with the Masters of the Marathon*



MIKE WARD

The marathon. This grueling test of skill and stamina represents the ultimate challenge to the human body. A 26 mile journey of pain that only a few can survive.

Then there's the video game marathon. That unique ability to play for an unlimited number of hours on a single quarter. However, as you'll soon discover, video game marathons require the same kinds of preparation and endurance that are practiced by leading athletes. Strict diets and medical procedures are followed, because the player not only has to fight agonizing strain and fatigue, but he must also remain in constant control of his computer opponent. Even a momentary loss in concentration can introduce the most skilled players to the end of his game.

In this edition of the **Player Profile** we introduce you to two of the world's leading video game marathoners. Both **Jim Vollandt** and **Mike Ward** possess the skills of the top video game masters. However, both of these talented gamers also have a unique talent that enables them to play their favorite games for extended periods of time (did I hear 78 hours?) on just one coin.

Jim Vollandt and Mike Ward are experts of their craft. Vollandt, a native of La Verne, California, has relied on his endurance skills on numerous occasions. He's played against the best in the **Masters Tournaments** (recording the high on **Galaga** with an impressive 2,278,190) and, in 1985, he took the ironman title by playing the video game **Joust** for an amazing 67½ hours. And although he failed to take home the \$10,000 purse (offered by a California company to anyone who can play for at least 100 hours in a competitive setting) his dreams of reaching that goal were untarnished.

Mike Ward, on the other hand, uses his talents every time he plays. The resident video game magician of Madison, Wisconsin, Mike has also claimed several **Guinness Book of World Record** high scores and recently played one of his favorite marathon machines, **Tapper**, for a truly incredible 78 hours! Twenty-four year old Ward is confident about his chances at breaking the 100 hour barrier as he constantly prepares for his next attempt.

Top Score recently spoke with both of these talented young men. We discussed playing strategies, game selections, and other important beliefs which carry these two through some of the hardest gaming experiences of their lives...
TS: First give us some background on yourselves. What got you interested in video games?

Mike Ward: I first became interested in video games when a friend of mine broke the world record on **Battlezone** at a local arcade. He told

me that he had seen me play and that I was just as good as he was. I'd have to say that it was this encouragement that got me going.

Jim Vollandt: My experience is very similar. I started playing video games around 1979 when **Asteroids** first appeared. My friends and I would go down to the local arcade and compete against each other. Pretty soon, I was able to achieve scores that were above and beyond those of my friends. And, as I got better, my game time kept increasing until I could play for hours on one quarter.

TS: I'm sure that made you quite popular with your friends. When did you realize that you were better than most players Mike?

Ward: A few months after I started playing the games we got **Satan's Hollow** in. I took to it immediately, and within three weeks I had more than tripled the current world record.

TS: Give us your definition of a 'marathon' game?

Ward: To me a marathon game has got to last at least 20 hours because you don't even begin to feel the strain until then.

TS: What persuaded you to attempt your first marathon play and on what game did you play?

Vollandt: My first marathon grew out of an extraordinarily long game of **Asteroids**. I really had made no formal preparations and I probably could have played for quite some time, but the boards fried after just 21 hours. At the time I had over 60 ships in reserve.

Ward: I first contemplated a marathon when a game called **Gyruss** arrived at a nearby arcade. Within five days I was playing ten hour games so I decided to go for it. I eventually went 37 hours and had a final score of 36 million. At the time it was a challenge, but I have beaten that score several times since then.

TS: What do you do to get in shape for a marathon?

Vollandt: The first thing I do is to purchase a few supplies; things like Ben Gay, bandages, gloves and aspirin. These things are all used during the contest to help keep my muscles relaxed.

A few nights before the marathon I stay awake long into the night, getting maybe 4-6 hours of sleep each night. Then, the night before, being exhausted from the previous days of deprivation, I get as much sleep as possible, usually around 12 hours.

Ward: It's probably not surprising but I use similar techniques. I go on a strict protein diet, however, and get all the caffeine out of my system for at least a month and a half before the event. I also get lots of sleep and do lots of exercise, concentrating on my lower back muscles to avoid as much pain as possible.

(continued on page 14)

Crystal Castles was a smashing success when it hit the arcades in late 1983. **Crystal Castles** managed to attract women as well as die-hard gaming fans, due in part to its non-violent play themes. Even today, the game continues to make respectable collections while it challenges and delights players of all ages.

This edition of the **Strategy Session** will focus on the finer aspects of **Crystal Castles** and show you, step by step, how to beat one of the toughest games of all time!

The character that you represent, with the aid of a trak-ball and jump button, is **Bentley Bear**. Bentley's goal in life is to collect gems laid out on a variety of three-dimensional mazes while avoiding a number of tricky opponents. This bear ain't no *Teddy Ruxpin*!

Of all the creatures that inhabit Bentley's surreal environment, the majority can be divided into two groups: those that track the bear and those that don't.

Of the enemies that track Bentley, the most difficult to avoid is most likely the evil tree. This monstrous maple tries to follow Bentley's every move, shadowing his path and pursuing you in a straight line.

The crystal balls, on the other hand, are a bit

than the skeleton.

The witch's cauldron is the final obstacle confronting Bentley. It is occasionally placed in a pathway and requires only a tap of the 'jump' button to avoid.

SCORING

The main way to earn points is to collect the gems themselves, which start out at one point each and increase in value up to 99 points each. It is important to move quickly in the game and to collect the most gems possible, as this is the key to the highest scores. To complete a maze, all the gems must be picked up. There is a bonus if Bentley can collect the last gem on each maze, so try to be sure that none of the enemies gets to it first.

On most mazes a hat and a honeypot will appear. The hat is worth 500 points if Bentley can pick it up, and, more importantly, it will make him invulnerable for a short period of time. Berthilda the witch, who appears on every fourth maze, can also be eliminated for 3,000 points if Bentley touches her while wearing the hat. The honeypot is worth 1,000 points and picking it up can delay the bees landing. When they return, however, they land at the same spot that the honey was originally placed.

You must then get to level 5/3 where the last warp is. Like 1/1, simply jump in the back left corner of the maze in advance to 7/1.

You must complete 5 more screens to set up the level 8 warp on your next game. With a little practice and some help from the patterns for 8/1, 9/3, and 9/4, you should be able to complete levels 7/1, 7/3, and 7/4 with no problem at all.

Once you have the warp tunnel on 1/1 up to level 8, wait for the balls to land. As they do, press jump and then bring Bentley out of the tunnel, along the left wall, and then towards the front of the maze. When done correctly, you can get an extra 1,683 points in gems in addition to the 490,000 points awarded for warping. You will be taken to 8/1 to begin your game. The advice for each of the following boards will take some practice, but will return a lot of points while minimizing deaths for Bentley. This is important, since a life bonus is given at the end of the game.

8/1: Staircase (Gemeater Wave)

Start by clearing the entire square of gems Bentley is facing. Next, clear the lines and the square to the left, and get the hat. Use it to move across the lower stairs, and then go down

STRATEGY SESSION

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HOW TO
MASTER

CRYSTAL CASTLES

SECRET WARPS

There are ten levels in **Crystal Castles**, each divided into four separate structures. Bonus points are awarded for speed and precision if you can complete the game's last board, so it's important to expedite your journey and avoid any unnecessary sight-seeing. In addition to playing the game from the beginning, a number of shortcuts exist which net the highest scores. These secret 'warps' advance Bentley to higher levels while increasing your score dramatically.

Begin every game by warping if you want the highest score possible. You must use three different secret warp spots to help take you to level 8 (the highest starting level). Once you are there, all subsequent games may begin on level 8 by using the warp tunnel which will appear on level 1, maze 1 (1/1). This allows the highest possible time bonus in the game, which is important for a good score.

The first warp is on level 1/1 and can be performed by going around behind the maze's castle and jumping Bentley in the back left corner. You will earn 140,000 points and warp to 3/1, on which the next warp appears. To perform warp two you **MUST** wear the hat while jumping at the middle bottom of the hidden ramp. This will transport you to 5/1 with 280,000 points.

and pick up the gems on the right side of the maze. Move back up the stairs to the top, go to the dead end section on the left, and then the identical section to the right. Try to get all of the gems on the middle walkways in between. Now, being careful of the gemeaters, take the elevator up to the final back section and clear it.

8/2: Cross Maze

First, get the line of gems to the left of Bentley, and then go inside the cross maze section and quickly pick up the four lines of gems not in the actual cross section. You will end up where you went in. Now move to the left stairway, pausing at the bottom to bring the tree towards you. Go up the stairs and move one gem space to the right, so the tree will be trapped. Now get the gems down the other stairway and come back to the top, being careful not to let the bees down. When the elevator that leads to the honey has come down, get on and quickly get the honey. After you've done this, get off and clear the gems in the top cross maze quickly. Now move right and down to the lower cross maze, clearing these gems while avoiding gemeaters and keeping the tree trapped. At the end of this maze you should have around 535,000 points.

more flexible but just as dangerous, since they can work their way around obstacles by gaining momentum.

To make things even worse, a swarm of bees drops in periodically to speed things up, moving in the same manner as the tree in an effort to protect the honey.

Although the rest of Bentley's foes don't go directly after him, they still pose a variety of problems while getting in the way. The most prevalent and troublesome of this type of opponent are the gemeaters, who not only block the way, but can eat any gems (and extra points) they happen upon. Note that the trees and balls also eliminate any gems they touch.

One effective way to rid yourself of the gemeaters is to simply touch them while they are eating a gem. The benefits of this are two-fold. Not only will this action eliminate the gemeater from that board, but it will award 500 points as well. This is a simple accomplishment in lower levels, but you can expect difficulty on level 7 and above, as the enemies move much more quickly.

Bentley has less of a threat from the ghost and the skeleton, both of which move about randomly. However, it must be noted, that the movements of the ghost are somewhat faster

Strategy Session

8/3: Hidden Ramp

Begin by quickly clearing the square of gems Bentley is facing. Now, go up the zig-zag staircase just to the left. Move through the honey from right to left and clear the gems around the base of the elevator. The tree will come towards you but be blocked by the 1,000 point indicator left over from the honey. Take the elevator up to the top and clear it in a counter-clockwise fashion. Take the left elevator down and get the hat, using it to clear the remaining gems. Great care must be taken to avoid a tree or a gemaeter getting to the last gem before Bentley.

8/4: Berthilda's Fortress

Move Bentley to the gem on which the hat lands right away (it's the third one from the front), and stand there to get the hat as it falls. As soon as you get (the bouncing bonnet,) move towards the back of the maze, then left, the forward, collecting the gems around the border of the screen and stopping against the wall to the left (adjacent to the honey). Timing the elevator which leads to the upper section, quickly get on and get the witch while Bentley still has the hat. Next, swing out into the open gem section, and then back against the wall to the right of where the honey was. To avoid the balls (which have the tree blocked) from moving out from behind the wall, grab the remaining gems in this section by moving quickly to the front and then returning. Get on the elevator just as it's about ready to go down and move quickly towards the back of the maze wall that faces the remaining gems. Again, this is to avoid releasing the balls. As before, clear the gems here by moving back and forth while avoiding the gemaeters. If you have the opportunity, eliminate one as it's eating around the inside perimeter of the maze. This should net a few hundred more points. At this stage of the game you should have almost 570,000.

9/1: Impossible Staircase

This maze provides a much appreciated break in difficulty. The impossible staircase is the easiest of the nine boards you must complete to finish the game. Start by quickly moving Bentley up the stairway and then left before the meanies fall, collecting the two gem lines. Next, jump the ball and the tree to get the hat. (Note that if you don't retrieve the hat during the first few seconds of the mazes of level 9, it will turn into a lethal crystal ball.) Move to the position **BETWEEN** the rightmost V and E in the word "LEVEL," shown at the top right onscreen. Wait here until right as the 500 in the hat's place disappears. At this time, quickly move left and down to the bottom of the maze. Clear the back rectangle of gems next to the honey, being careful of the bees. When they leave, get the honey and the gems at the end of the staircase. Pause here to trap the enemies, letting them get the two gems in the dead-end. Now clear the rest of the maze. Done correctly, this pattern enables you to trap the enemies for the duration of the maze.

9/2: Nasty Tree

This is one of the most difficult levels, mainly because of the many gemaeters and the fast tree. Begin the round by moving Bentley to the gem that the hat lands on, which is the third one

from the rear. Once you've got it, move Bentley in small circles to collect gems, constantly proceeding towards the honey before the hat expires. Get the honey and then quickly circle onto the short stairway to avoid bringing the tree up. Next, clear the gems at the end of this stairway and the one next to it before clearing the section in between the elevators. Now, move to a position that will allow the tree to ride the right elevator up. When it gets on, clear the gems around the other two stairways while keeping the tree pinned down. Clear the large flat section of the remaining gems before moving up the short left stairway again and jumping the tree. The timing for this is very tricky! If all gems but the top ones are gone, go up and finish the round by clearing those. Your score at the end of this maze should be almost 620,000.

9/3: Hidden Spiral

This maze affords an easy opportunity to eliminate a line of gemaeters right at the start of the round. Move up to the third gem from the back of the top right corner and move into the gemaeters as they land. Now, quickly move down to get the hat before quickly running up to the letter that the ghost is on. Pick up the gems on the letter and, if you were lucky, the ball will have followed Bentley up and is now trapped. Move out before the hat disappears and clear the other parts of the maze, in a clockwise fashion, before the gemaeter and/or ball can. Finally, go up the hidden spiral and complete the maze, timing the arrival of the bee swarm to avoid getting Bentley stung.

9/4: Berthilda's Dungeon

This maze is probably the most difficult to execute well, but timing and correct anticipation help. As on 9/3, you will want to eliminate the gemaeters at the start of the board. Because there is a line of three, and not two like on the previous maze, timing is critical. Move Bentley to the sixth gem from the back and continue through the gemaeters when they land to get the hat. Then move up to the witch's 'tower.' If it's one of the shorter heights, go up and kill the witch. But if it's one of the taller ones, don't get on the elevator, since the hat will be gone by the time you reach the top. If you get to the top, clear away the gems while avoiding the ball and ride the elevator down. Get the honey and then clear the gems at the middle and bottom, trying to avoid letting the balls out. Once they are out, however, avoid using the stairways, as the balls move very fast and can trick you by appearing to travel in one direction while moving in another.

If you can't get up the elevator earlier in the round, simply follow the steps outlined after that portion and then go up the elevator last, completing the maze. If you're able to get the witch you should have around 665,000 points.

10/1: The End

The last maze of the game looks very different from the others, but it isn't that difficult once you learn an effective pattern. Start by rolling the trak-ball in a northwest direction. This will put you in the lower-left quadrant of the maze.

Next, get the line of gems, jump the gemaeter, and then jump over the tree and onto the back section. Once you land, get the honey and clear the back portion of the screen while avoiding the skeleton. During this time, the balls and the tree should be trapped. Move to the top right portion of this section so that the tree will be released. It will pick up any gems that may be left on this last row. Jump the tree and then

go to the top left part of the section you landed on. Jump from there to the front section. From this position move left and then back to where you landed, moving around the top perimeter. Move down to the cauldron before retrieving any remaining gems. Finally, jump in a north-easterly direction to the last section of gems and quickly get them to end the maze.

Bonus Points

At this point, your score before the bonuses should fall in the 670,000 - 680,000 range. To that, there are two special awards that are added: the aforementioned life and time bonuses. You get 10,000 points for every life left, so it's important that you don't die more than once within the course of a game or you won't be able to reap the maximum life bonus of 60,000. The time bonus should be somewhere between 124,000 and 132,000, depending on how quickly you've played. You should be able to get a 130,000 point time bonus after you've practiced the patterns outlined in this article.

These patterns are designed to produce scores of at least 860,000 points. Using these exact patterns, I've achieved the low 870,000's. If you want to score higher, simply practice eating gemaeters on the other boards. This is the key to obtaining scores of 880,000 and beyond.

About the Author

Mark Alpiger, 24, is a resident of Louisville, Kentucky. He currently boasts the world's record on **Crystal Castles** with an astounding 891,652 points. He also came in first place during the **1986 Masters** contest this past summer, with a score of 881,306 published in the **Guinness Book of World Records**. Mark estimates that he's played the game over 4,000 times and, to cut down on quarters, he's purchased his very own machine! While **Crystal Castles** is his particular forte, he's also proficient at a variety of other games, especially those with trak-ball controllers.

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SPECIAL OFFER!

Now available, exclusively to readers of the **Top Score Newsletter**, is the latest in-depth **How-to-Master** strategy booklet on how to master **Atari's Crystal Castles** video game.

Everything is covered in this comprehensive look at one of the most popular games of all time. **Crystal Castles** world record holder and top playing ace **Mark Alpiger** has included all of his secrets so that you can improve your scores. Also included are a variety of secret tricks that will make you look like a champ! This information has never before been published, and is available only to members of the **Amusement Players Association**.

For your copy of **How-to-Master: Crystal Castles**, send a check or money order for \$2.95 to:

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"How-to-Master" Offer
P.O. Box 1558
Torrance, California 90505

Player Profile

(continued from page 11)

TS: So strain and fatigue are your main adversaries?

Vollandt: Most definitely! Comfort is my main concern and by using the aforementioned supplies, as well as a custom chair, I can usually remain relaxed.

TS: What else do you do to stay awake during a marathon? How do you overcome the problems of eating and bathroom visits without jeopardizing your game?

Vollandt: It may sound funny, but the easiest way for me to stay awake is by not playing the game and to keep my mind preoccupied with other things. By the time I attempt a marathon the playing of the game has basically become a reflex action, requiring little thought to play. By concentrating too hard on the game I find that you can put yourself to sleep.

Ward: I always set my game next to the bathroom when I play a marathon, then I wait for a bonus screen and run. That is the most common question that I'm asked by the way. When I eat I just have someone cut my food up for me and I eat during bonus screens or by playing with one hand.

Vollandt: Other people are absolutely the most

important factor. Not only do they help with eating like Mike pointed out, they also keep me preoccupied so that I don't fall asleep.

TS: What's your favorite marathon game and what is the longest that you've ever played it (on one coin)?

Ward: My favorite marathon game is without a doubt **Bally/Midway's Tapper** which I've played for 78 hours at one sitting. I was feeling pretty good at the time and, if the game hadn't malfunctioned, I think that I probably would have been able to go the 100 hour distance.

Vollandt: In the past my favorite game was **Joust** (see companion piece), which I played a total of 67½ hours during the 1985 **Ironman** tournament. Now, however, I'm working on **Gauntlet**. I enjoy the game much more because it has more variety and because it's a lot easier to take breaks and recover time.

TS: Any tips for players interested in attempting a marathon score?

Ward: Please make sure that you keep a perspective on your health while putting your body through all this strain. And, oh yes, make sure you bring plenty of Band-Aids?

Jim Vollandt and Mike Ward. Unique individuals with an unstoppable will to succeed. With players like these, you can bet that the goal of 100 continuous hours of play will be met just as surely as the sound barrier was broken. Good luck in the future!

A LESSON IN PATIENCE

The ups and downs of the video game marathon

The setting: Johnny Zee's Family Fun Center

The prize: \$10,000

It was the 1985 **Ironman** competition, the first organized video game marathon. Over 20 of the world's leading game players were ready to vie for recognition in the **Guinness Book of World Records** as well as the whopping \$10,000 grand prize that would go to the first player to last 100 hours on one play.

Each player had a separate strategy that they boasted would take them the distance. One slept for two days prior to the event while another refused to eat anything but bananas. And, amongst all this talent, there was an unknown player by the name of Jim Vollandt. Although he had never played video games competitively, Jim would soon be turning a lot of heads.

The following account of this record-breaking attempt, written by Jim himself, not only details the hardships he encountered but spotlights his never-ending will to succeed...

July 7 10:00 AM **Start** Feel good, but I'm a little nervous due to the bucks involved.

July 7 6:00 PM **8 Hours** The Ben Gay and bandages go on as my muscles become tense. I try to settle in to the game to relieve tension.

July 8 2:00 AM **16 Hours** I continue to apply the ointment. I'm beginning to feel good.

July 8 10:00 AM **24 Hours** I'm on a high and feeling good. My muscles are relaxed and the game is playing easy.

July 9 3:00 AM **41 Hours** I'm on cruise control now as the games begin to claim their first victims. The field is now cut in half.

July 9 10:00 AM **48 Hours** The worst has happened — total machine failure. Although the contest allows for a restart, I am mentally defeated. Not only do I have to accept the loss of 210 reserve men, I have to endure the strain of building this back up again.

July 9 8:00 PM **58 Hours** It's been 10 hours since my restart and I've managed to build my reserves back up to 40. I've had no breaks, however, and I'm totally exhausted.

July 9 10:00 PM **60 Hours** I'm beginning to slip. My last opponent has just finished his game. I've won the title but there's still a long way to go for the 10 grand!

July 10 5:30 AM **67½ Hours** Game Over — I've had no breaks since my restart, and I just couldn't keep the pace. Like they say, there's always next time!



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The Hermosa Penny Arcade sports the best in coin-op entertainment.



posts the high scores on most of the games as competitors vie to see their scores listed in **Top Score**. As an added challenge to regulars, local contests are held every Sunday evening (with free popcorn!), with the top winners receiving free passes to Disneyland or Magic Mountain. How I wish I could stay until Sunday to see how I would fare against the strong local talent.

My trip to this arcade wouldn't be complete without playing a few games. With a little luck I could leave my mark (WAM) in this beach town. And, with only twelve more hours to spare, I ought to be able to get at least one or two games in! Until next time, this is Woody McCoy wishing you well on your arcade adventures...

Our 'Cades

(continued from page 8)

As I examined the games closer I found them all to be in tip-top shape. And there were some really great attractions that had me going, like the **1942** and **Halley's Comet** converted from old **Star Trek** sit-down cabinets. These games were a real treat to play on the large screens.

As I continued through the arcade I discovered that the players take their gaming seriously here. Take for instance **Richard Powell**, **EnduroRacer** world champ, or **Rich Frost**, **Top Gunner** record holder. Dale Moore



AMUSEMENT PLAYERS ASSOCIATION INTERNATIONAL SCOREBOARD

(All scores effective 01/01/87)

VIDEO

1942	11,970,360	Jack Chen	10/17/86	Le Fun	Austin, Texas
Arkanoid	1,161,430	Kevin Fisher	12/11/86	University Arcade	Rockville, Maryland
Arm Wrestling	822,150	Mark Haber	10/10/86	Space Station	New York, New York
Berzerk (Fast)	91,070	Ron Bailey	03/14/84	Putt Putt Golf & Games	Gastonia, North Carolina
Bubble Bobble	2,648,570	Ted Cross	12/04/86	Hermosa Arcade	Hermosa Beach, California
Commando	835,700	Jeff Wakefield	06/28/86	Bally's Aladdin's Castle	Loveland, Colorado
Crystal Castles	891,221	Mark Alpiger	10/21/86	Mark's Place	Louisville, Kentucky
Elevator Action	143,450	G. Ben Carter	06/28/86	Bally's Aladdin's Castle	Fremont, Nebraska
Enduro Racer	23,102,829	Donn Nauert	12/13/86	Le Fun	Austin, Texas
Future Spy	396,350	Joey Wisniewski	10/04/86	Bally's Aladdin's Castle	Wausau, Wisconsin
Galaga	2,278,190	Jim Vollandt	06/29/86	Bally's Aladdin's Castle	La Verne, California
Gunsmoke	1,465,250	Jaime Guzman	11/04/86	Le Fun	Austin, Texas
Gyruss	41,090,450	Anthony Fodrizio	03/22/84	Video Circus	Straford, Connecticut
Hang-On	40,715,030	Don Novak	06/28/86	Bally's Aladdin's Castle	Wichita, Kansas
Hyper Sports	473,160	Mike McNear	10/08/84	Bally's Aladdin's Castle	Houston, Texas
Ikari Warriors	225,700	Bart Jacoby	09/16/86	7-11	Atlanta, Georgia
Kicker	4,255,000	RAC Carpana	12/02/86	Fascination	New York, New York
Mach 3 (Fighter)	471,500	Mark Haber	03/14/84	Westwood Arcade	Westwood, California
Mach 3 (Bomber)	361,900	Sur Baycroft	06/29/85	Johnny Zee's Family Fun	Victoria, British Columbia
Mario Bros.	3,481,550	Perry Rodgers	12/12/84	Family Fun Fair	San Luis Obispo, California
Mat Mania	5,000,150	RAC Carpana	12/10/86	Fascination	New York, New York
Mr. Do!	26,030,050	David Breckon	01/26/86	Tom's Arcade	London, Ontario
Ms. Pac-Man	874,530	Chris Ayra	06/30/85	Johnny Zee's Family Fun	Victoria, British Columbia
Night Stocker	3,748,350	John Reedy	12/09/86	Le Fun	Austin, Texas
Omega Race (7 life)	3,290,900	Thomas Gault	09/13/86	Tom's Arcade	Duluth, Minnesota
Pole Position	67,260	Les Lagier	06/29/84	Space Shuttle	San Jose, California
Punch-Out!!	8,585,130	Chris Emery	06/29/85	Johnny Zee's Family Fun	Victoria, British Columbia
Q*Bert	33,073,520	Rob Gerhardt	11/25/83	Bim's Place	Lloydminster, Alberta
Road Runner	2,287,420	Mark Haber	12/10/86	Fascination	New York, New York
Rygar	2,325,110	Donn Nauert	12/16/86	Le Fun	Austin, Texas
Spy Hunter	9,512,590	Paul Dean	06/28/85	Huish Family Fun	Los Angeles, California
Star Wars	300,007,894	Robert Mruczek	01/20/84	Fascination	New York, New York
Super Mario Bros.	2,229,350	Michael Perring	06/28/86	Bally's Aladdin's Castle	San Francisco, California
Tapper	9,068,625	Mike Ward	06/29/86	Bally's Aladdin's Castle	Madison, Wisconsin
Track & Field	92,190	Phil Britt	02/01/84	Captain Video	Los Angeles, California

PINBALL

Blackout	4,675,100	Mark Haber	10/17/82	Playland	New York, New York
Comet	49,350,620	Jelly Cartagena	02/17/86	Broadway Arcade	New York, New York
Genesis	22,413,620	Jelly Cartagena	10/14/86	Broadway Arcade	New York, New York
Grand Lizard	15,312,650	Jelly Cartagena	06/23/86	Broadway Arcade	New York, New York
Gold Wings	54,888,690	Jelly Cartagena	12/02/86	Broadway Arcade	New York, New York
High Speed	14,474,670	Jelly Cartagena	02/04/86	Broadway Arcade	New York, New York
Hollywood Heat	56,783,480	Jelly Cartagena	08/22/86	Broadway Arcade	New York, New York
Pin-Bot	15,245,720	Jelly Cartagena	11/12/86	Broadway Arcade	New York, New York
Road Kings	18,288,240	Jelly Cartagena	08/20/86	Broadway Arcade	New York, New York
Sorcerer	29,820,070	Jelly Cartagena	08/02/85	Broadway Arcade	New York, New York
Space Shuttle	18,506,390	Jelly Cartagena	12/04/86	Broadway Arcade	New York, New York
Special Force	7,381,530	Jelly Cartagena	11/14/86	Broadway Arcade	New York, New York

Contest ★ Contest ★ Contest ★ TOP SCORE CHALLENGE ★ Contest ★ Contest ★ Contest

In this edition of **Top Score**, the **Challenge** dares you to try your hand at what could be the most competitive game ever created: **Atari's 720°**. This intense skateboarding contest invites players to perform a variety of dangerous skating techniques within a surrealistic environment so bizarre, it would have Rod Serling screaming in madness! Indeed, **720°** is arcade action at its very best!

For those of you who think you have what it takes, submit your highest score on the one-player version of **720°** (either Beginner or Expert skill levels will be allowed) by April 15, 1987* and you could win a bunch of surprises, including \$20 worth of free plays at your local gaming location.**

Look for the excitement of **720°** where you play video games and take the **Top Score Challenge**. Fame and fortune await those of you who do...

Send your high scores to:
Amusement Players Association
Top Score Challenge
P.O. Box 1558
Torrance, California 90505

www.videoparadise-sanjose.com

(Use official APA high score registration forms when submitting any video game or pinball scores. For a free form, send a SASE to the above address.)

*All entries must be postmarked by April 15, 1987. The APA is not responsible for any delays or mishaps that prevent your entry from reaching the above address in time.

**The contents of the special prize package is decided by the APA. The \$20 worth of free plays will be awarded directly to the player. All scores are individually verified by the APA Directors. The decisions of the APA Directors is final.

VOID WHERE PROHIBITED BY LAW

1987 North American Tournament of Champions

(continued from Front Cover)

Nauert of Austin, Texas, a two-year veteran of Player-of-the-Year competitions who had just come off a startling victory in his hometown to claim the title of **Texas State Player-of-the-Year**.

Also on hand, however, was **Joseph Feldt**, a resident of Silver Springs, Maryland who also was able to boast of **Arkanoid** scores in excess of 1,500,000.

Local talent included the legendary **David Dean**, a player best known for his ability to master all types of games.

Other big names in attendance included **Steve Reyno**, **Mark Foster**, **Tim Uyeda**, and **Karen Hapke**, the first woman to ever compete in a national video game tournament. The field of competitors also contained several unknown names determined to give the top guns a run for their money!

DAY ONE

As the first day of tournament play begins, **Donn Nauert** is the focus of attention as he publicly sets his sights on the **Night Stocker** world record of 3,748,350 held by fellow Texan **John Reedy**. **Joe Feldt**, who has traveled from Maryland to vie for a spot on the **U.S. National Video Game Team**, immediately closes in on the **Arkanoid** world record.

Talk may be cheap, but these champions have the skill to back their words. **Donn Nauert** makes good on his promise by scoring 3,766,700 in the early hours of the contest. Never content, **Donn** claims he will go for his own record the next day. Others however, are not as fortunate, falling short of their planned scores. With an attitude of a true champ, the always optimistic and determined players vow to redeem themselves come the second day of the competition.

After the first day of high action play, **Donn Nauert**, clearly becoming the tournament favorite, leads the pack of players with a tournament score of 276.63 (out of a possible 300), followed closely by **Michael Pirring**, a native of San Francisco, who boasted a very respectable 268.57. Rounding out the top three was the local favorite **David Dean**, following close behind with his tournament score of 267.19.

DAY TWO

As day two begins, the players ready themselves for what is guaranteed to be a dynamic finish to a dynamic contest! The top contenders agree that the key game in determining the outcome of the 1986 Player-of-the-Year contest will most likely be **Power Drive**. Although scores are close on all games, **Donn Nauert** has broken even farther ahead on **Night Stocker** with an outstanding tally of 3,963,900 points. A breakthrough on **Power Drive** could translate into a significant lead which, in turn, would result in a large percentage point swing, possibly enabling a fourth or fifth ranked player to increase his standings among the top three.

Tim Uyeda uses a strategy of perfection, gathering all possible points on all levels, as he concentrates on the **Power Drive** score. His patience and all-out physical endurance give **Tim** the break he needed, as he turns in an incredible total of 170,900 on just one credit of play.

Unfortunately, the large swing in points does little more than change the positions of the number two and number three players who trade places.

THE FINAL COUNTDOWN

As the final rotation is made, players flock to the titles which they feel will improve their standings the most. **Donn Nauert** feels comfortably secure with his position in first place. His tournament score of 260.06 keeps him well ahead of second place contestant, **David Dean**. **Dean**, holding on to his number two seeding, turns his attention to **Night Stocker** in an effort to chip away at **Donn**'s world-class performance.

With only minutes to go before the cut-off time for starting new games, **Tim Uyeda** begins his last bid for a shot at the number three position and a brand new arcade game by starting a game of **Arkanoid**. **Michael Pirring** anxiously awaits the outcome of **Uyeda**'s game. His 230.61 tournament score could be bested if **Uyeda** claimed the top score on **Arkanoid**.

With the majority of the competitors playing their final games, all eyes turn to **Tim Uyeda** and **Joe Feldt**, who, at a distant fifth, has little chance of claiming a prize, and the final minutes of their **Arkanoid** games.

Never to be intimidated, **Joe** uses his sharp reflexes and basic gaming skills to score a personal triumph as well as a new **APA** world record, 1,295,420. An outstanding effort that **Tim Uyeda** unfortunately cannot match. He finishes his final play and consequently places fourth overall in the tournament.

It goes without saying that this competition could not have been realized with the support of video game enthusiasts everywhere. For some, however, diligence paid off. **Donn Nauert** took home a brand new **Power Drive** video, courtesy of **Bally/Midway**, while **David Dean** chose **Night Stocker** as his prize. **Mike Pirring** gladly accepted a freshly fitted **Arkanoid** for his third place performance.

Amusement Players Association's Players Choice Awards

In the last issue of the **Top Score Newsletter**, members of the **APA** were asked to chose their favorite games of 1986. With hundreds of responses pouring in from around the world, the awards for top games were very close indeed! However, it is a distinct pleasure to present the following honors to the leading manufacturers of last year...

Best Visual Enhancement in a Video Game	Sega's Out Run
Best Audio Enhancement in a Video Game	Atari's Gauntlet
Most Innovative Video Game	Atari's Gauntlet
Best Pinball Machine of 1986	William's High Speed
Best Video Game of 1986	Nintendo's Super Mario Bros.

And, for his pioneering contributions to the sport of competitive video game playing, the **Amusement Players Association** proudly presents the coveted **Sportsman of the Year** award to **Bally/Sente President Robert Lundquist**. An appropriate honor to a leading figure in the coin-operated amusement industry. Congratulations to all!

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(Left to Right) Top Finalists - **Donn Nauert**, **Steve Reyno** and **Tim Uyeda** try their (blistered) hands at **Power Drive**.



Tim Uyeda tries his hand at 10 Ms. Pac Machines.

Donn Nauert accepts the First Place Trophy from fellow U.S. National Video Game Team member **Perry Rodgers**.